

Iraqi parliament ratifies oil contract with Russia

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's national assembly has ratified an oil contract with Russia under which Moscow is expected to develop seven to eight billion barrels of reserves in Iraq's southern Qurna oilfield, Baghdad newspapers said on Monday.

One newspaper said the assembly unanimously ratified the contract because of "the relations of friendship between Iraq and Russia on both official and popular levels."

"This agreement is an important step in the dismantling of the unfair embargo and its total removal," said the government newspaper Al Jumhuriya.

Iraq and Russia signed the deal on March 21 but Moscow has reaffirmed it would not violate the current international trade curbs on Baghdad. Iraq has been under U.N. sanctions since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But details of the deal leaked to the Baghdad press show that Russia is under obligation to spend \$200 million during sanctions on activities related to Qurna development and to extending a \$100 million loan to Iraq to enable it buy necessary equipment.

The 23-year contract includes a plan under which Russia is expected to pump about 600,000 barrels per day. This, the experts say, will consume almost half of Qurna's proven reserves in 23 years at the end of which the Russians are obliged to

hand it back to Iraq.

Russia is also expected to treat the associated gas and deliver the surplus quantities to the Iraqi side free of charge.

Russia is required to give Iraq a grant of \$10 million in the form of materials and equipment needed for Qurna's development. The Russian side is also under obligation to spend about \$500 million in the first three years of signing the contract.

Qurna is 500 kilometres south of Baghdad and Iraq hopes to reap about \$70 billion dollars from it in 23 years.

The international trade curbs on Iraq place a blanket ban on its oil exports and investments in the country. The United Nations has allowed Iraq to pump \$2 billion worth of oil over six months on humanitarian grounds.

Baghdad newspapers also said a Turkish technical delegation was in Baghdad discussing with Iraqi counterparts ways of implementing a 20-year contract to sell Iraqi gas to Turkey expected to be formally approved in July.

The contract entails the construction of a 1,300 kilometre gas pipeline at a cost of \$2.5 billion. It would be capable of carrying 10 billion cubic feet of gas a year.

The final details of the deal would be set during a visit to Baghdad by Turkish Energy Minister Recai Kutan at the end of April.

Israel claims Iran has tested missiles

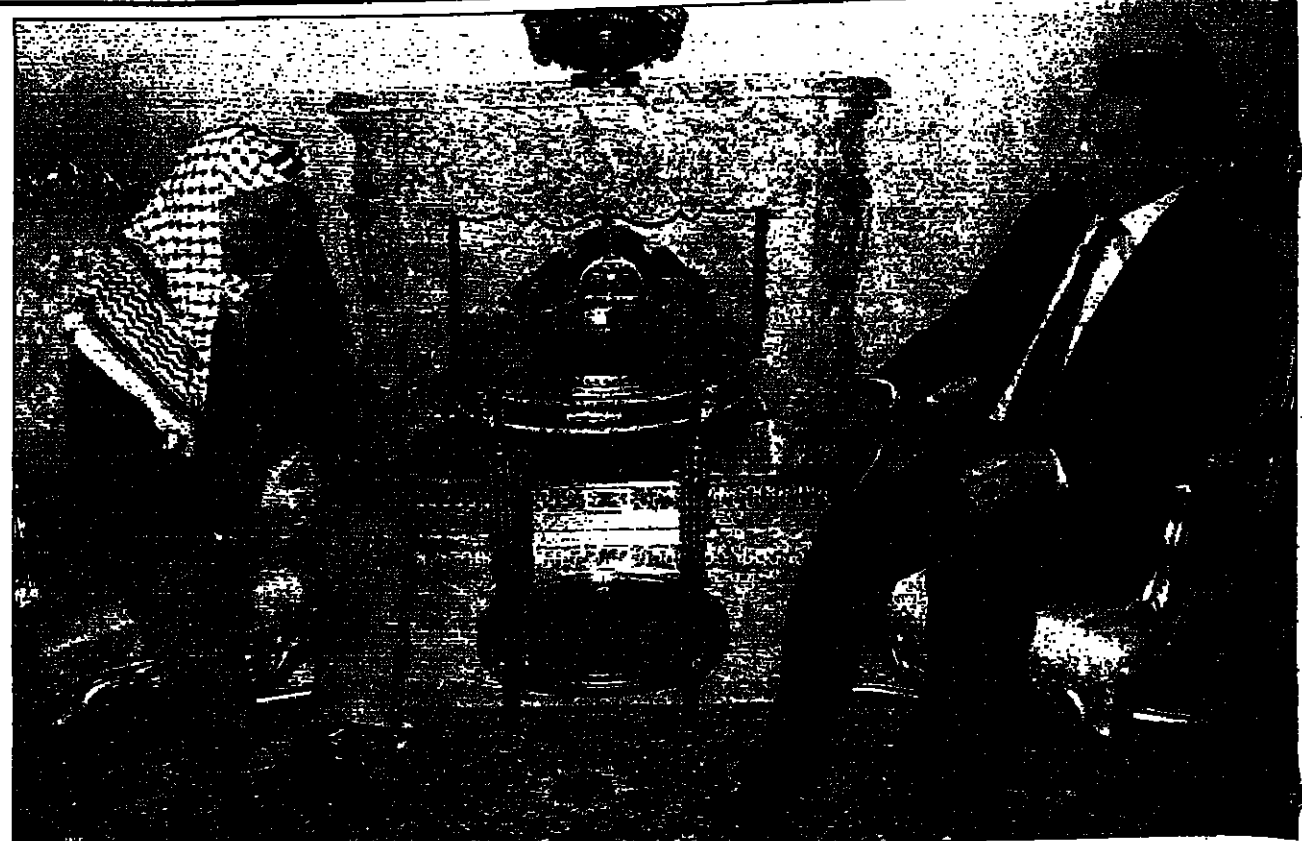
TEL AVIV (AFP) — Iran has carried out a preliminary test on long-range missiles with the help of Russian technicians, Israel's army force chief General Eitan Ben Eliahou said.

He told a public meeting in Tel Aviv on Sunday that the "ground test" was carried out two weeks ago, without giving details.

Iran has argued that it needs to rebuild its armed forces after the 1980-1988 war against Iraq and rejected Western charges that its military cooperation with Russia was upsetting the military balance in the Gulf.

Russia has delivered three diesel-powered Kilo-class submarines to Iran, and last month Israeli officials said Moscow was considering supplying Tehran with the technology to build SS-4 surface-to-surface missiles.

The SS-4 missile has a range of 1,600 kilometres, long enough to strike the Jewish state in case of war.



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak meets Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Monday. Egypt has launched a widespread diplomatic campaign to help break the stalemate between Israel and the Palestinians (Reuters photo)

Arafat meets Mubarak in Cairo before Baz departure to the U.S.

CAIRO (Agencies) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat arrived here Monday determined to ask Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to make "more" efforts to save the peace process from collapse.

"I will ask President Mubarak for more efforts and I will thank him for what he is doing to protect the peace process," Mr. Arafat told reporters before heading into talks with the Egyptian president at the Itihadiya presidential palace outside Cairo.

The Palestinian president said he will discuss with Mr. Mubarak ways of "saving" the peace process from collapse because of Israel's "persistence in violating the accords which were signed."

The talks are focused on Israel's settlement policy as well

as the closure of Palestinian territories, Mr. Arafat said. Mr. Mubarak is dispatching his top political aide to the United States on Tuesday for talks on restarting Middle East peace negotiations.

Mr. Mubarak said in an interview published Monday in the weekly Mayo newspaper that he was sending Osama Al Baz, one of his political advisers, to Washington in response to a letter from U.S. President Bill Clinton.

The paper is published by Mr. Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party (NDP).

Peace talks between Palestinians and Israelis have collapsed since Israel's decision last month to go ahead with the construction of a settlement for Jews in Arab East Jerusalem.

Arabs and Israel head for Malta

(Continued from page 1)

tinians demand Israel halt the construction of the Jerusalem settlement first.

Mr. Netanyahu has repeatedly refused to halt the building.

David Bar-Ilan insisted that making the settlement in Jerusalem a part of the talks was "out of the question whatsoever" since building in the city Israel calls its capital is "not part of the Oslo peace accords."

EU and U.S. efforts to restore a dialogue between Israel and the PNA have "not (yet) proved conclusive," Mr. Rdaina said.

Israel Radio said U.S. State Department coordinator Dennis Ross would also be present in Malta. Mr. Ross is expected in the region at the end of this week.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright telephoned Mr. Arafat on Sunday night to discuss Washington's efforts to revive the peace process.

Palestinian negotiators held talks last week with Ms. Albright but stressed on their return to Gaza that Israel must "halt its violations of the (autonomy) accords" and stop work on Jewish settlements.

The Arab states, especially those in the eastern Mediterranean, argue that a debate on security cannot ignore Israel's attitude in the Middle East peace talks.

"The Arab concept is linked to developments in the Middle East peace process, because a bigger

threat to security and stability comes from what is happening there," said Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmad Attaf, coordinator of the Arab group.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bouez said upon leaving Beirut he wanted the 27 ministers to call for resumed Middle East peace talks under the guidelines set at the Madrid conference in 1991.

The key concepts in Madrid were "land-for-peace" — rejected by Mr. Netanyahu — and a ban on unilateral steps which "prejudice the outcome of talks on the final status of Jerusalem and the occupied territories."

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said on Saturday the European initiative was better than what the United States had to offer but still was not up to Arab expectations.

Europeans would like to keep the Middle East crisis in the background and concentrate on long-term economic and security ties between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, diplomats say.

"We're worried the Middle East peace problems might hijack the agenda and overshadow all the good work the Europeans have been doing," one European diplomat said.

"All the rancour will be directed at Israel but Levy and Arafat will be side by side. In the present context, that's a remarkable result in itself," he added.

30 more civilians killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Suspected Islamist militants killed 30 Algerians overnight in a village near Boufarik, 35 kilometres south of the capital Algiers, Algerian security forces said Monday.

In a statement, the security forces said the "cowardly" slaughter was carried out by a "group of terrorists" in the village of Douar Chaib Mohammed. Twenty-nine people were shot or hacked to death at the end of last week by suspected anti-government Islamists in the same region, including 22 — mostly women and children — from the same village.

Security forces did not give any details of the latest killings in their communiqué.

The civilian killings are part of a wave of massacres which the security forces attribute to armed Islamist extremists. The latest killings would put the death toll in the past 10 days at 173, mostly in the Mitidja plain which is patrolled by anti-guerrilla "self-defence" groups.

The wave of unrest comes as Algeria prepares for general elections on June 5, the first polls since the cancellation of elections in 1992 which an Islamic party was set to win.

Malaysia, Egypt call on Netanyahu to revive Middle East peace talks

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — Malaysia and Egypt on Monday jointly called on Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu to revive dying peace talks in the Middle East.

Both Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and visiting Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Ahmed Al Ganzoury slammed Mr. Netanyahu for being belligerent and unwilling to proceed with peace talks.

"Both prime ministers expressed dissatisfaction over the attitude of the Israeli leader towards peace in that region," Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was reported as saying by Bernama news agency.

"They are aware of the difficulties caused by Mr. Netanyahu who is belligerent and has not shown any interest to push ahead with the peace process," he said when briefing reporters on talks between Mr. Mahathir and Mr. Ganzoury.

Both leaders said it was critical for the peace process to move forward for the sake of both the Palestinians and Israelis.

Mr. Badawi added.

Israelis and Palestinians have not held peace talks since construction of a Jewish settlement in Israeli-occupied Arab East Jerusalem began March 18, triggering a wave of anti-Israel protests.

Predominantly Muslim Malaysia has no diplomatic ties with Israel but does have limited trade relations.

On bilateral issues, Mr. Mahathir and Mr. Ganzoury discussed areas of cooperation including air services, tourism, manufacturing and agriculture.

They said the private sectors in both countries would have "to follow up in terms of learning about each other as there was not much contact, trade and investment in the past," Mr. Badawi said.

Mr. Mahathir and Mr. Ganzoury later witnessed the signing of five agreements on investment, air transport, avoidance of double taxation, trade and tourism.

Officials said the investment guarantee agreement would protect investment in both countries and cover concerns over expropria-

tion and nationalisation issues, profits repatriation and settlement of disputes.

It would also pave the way for investors in both countries to collaborate in regional projects while Egypt could use Malaysia as a distribution centre for its exports to the region, they said.

Malaysia's bilateral trade with Egypt stood at \$250 million last year, accounting for a mere 0.2 per cent of Malaysia's total trade.

Major Malaysian exports to Egypt were palm oil, natural rubber, electronic products and paper board, totalling \$242 million in 1996 while imports comprised mainly fruits, spices and textile amounting to \$8 million.

Egypt currently has no investment in Malaysia, while only one Malaysian company, Sime-Darby Edible Oil Products, has invested there.

The Egyptian prime minister arrived here late Sunday on the first leg of an Asian tour which will also take him to Singapore and China.

He is scheduled to leave for Singapore late Tuesday.

Sudanese rebels hand over Ugandan rebels

KAMPALA (AFP) — Sudanese rebels who captured Ugandan rebels in southern Sudan have handed them over to the Ugandan military, the state-owned New Vision newspaper reported Monday.

The Ugandan members of the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF) included 104 members of its high command, the newspaper said.

A military spokesman told New Vision that 950 rebels had surrendered or been captured since March 12.

Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir flew out of Libya Sunday in defiance of U.N. sanctions which ban all flight from and to Libya.

The ban was imposed as a result of Libya's refusal to turn over two Libyan nationals suspected in the Pan Am bombing over Scotland.

General Bashir left Libya after meeting a Ugandan delegation

headed by Foreign Minister Eriya Kategaya to discuss mutual accusations of support for rebels.

A "big" group of Ugandan rebels in the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) has meanwhile entered Uganda from rear bases in Zaire, a senior security officer told New Vision.

That came after an attack on the Ugandan rebels by Zairean rebels at Buhira, Zaire, in which 80 of the Ugandan rebels were reportedly killed.

The ADF rebels, a combination of dissident Muslims and former members of the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), reportedly entered the western Ugandan district of Kasere.

"Since they are here now, it is better for us because we shall now fight and finish them," the security officer said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Cartoon — Budgie-The Little Helicopter
14:30Grimmy
15:00French Programmes
16:00Super Sports Follies
16:30Dog House
17:00 Preserving for the Taste of it
17:15The Album Show
18:00French Programmes
19:30News Headlines
19:35Comedy — The Office
20:00Superstars of Action
20:30Encounter
21:10The Nature of Things
22:00News in English
22:25Snowy River
23:00Mission Impossible

PRAYER TIMES

04:42Fajr
06:03(Sunrise) Duha
12:36Dhuhr
16:12Asr
19:08Maghreb
20:29Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweiffish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
632366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751
Amman International Church
Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932
Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to drop significantly. Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of showers and winds southwesterly moderate to active. On Wednesday, temperatures are expected to rise slightly and

winds becoming northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be dusty, cloudy, winds northerly active and seas choppy.

Amman10/16
Aqaba16/27
Deserts08/22
Jordan Valley14/25
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 25, Aqaba 31 Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 26 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tushq757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader832642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim830432
Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi893542
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asena pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy847660
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484
Al Quds pharmacy815615
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Nabhan995743
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Dept661111
Civil Defence Immediate Response630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information0853200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre
813813/32
Khalidi Maternity642381/6
Akkil Maternity642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Al-Bashir775111/26
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Moderna Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:20Beirut (RJ)
08:00Aqaba (add) (RJ)
09:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:00Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
12:10Amsterdam, Montreal, Toronto (RJ)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:00Damascus (RJ)
08:15Sanaa (RJ)
09:55Dhahran (add) (RJ)
10:25Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:35Aqaba (add) (RJ)
10:55Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
11:05Beirut (RJ)
11:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
17:20Cairo (RJ)
17:30London (RJ)
17:40Frankfurt (RJ)
19:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights

06:05 London, Damascus (BA)
13:00Riyadh (SV)
14:40Munich (LY)
18:05Kiev (LU)
19:15Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:10Cairo (MS)
21:30Tel Aviv (LY)
22:50Aden (CY)
23:35Lamaca (CY)
01:25Jakarta (GA)
03:00Rome (AZ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg

Apple700/500
Banana600/600
Banana (imported)980/600
Cabbage120/70
Carrot200/150
Cauliflower190/100
Cucumber (large)220/130
Cucumber (small)360/200
Eggplant200/120
Fava beans400/250
Garlic (Green)350/250
Grape fruit200/100
Lemon550/350
Marrow (large)250/120
Marrow (small)340/250
Onion (green)230/130
Onion (dry)420/300
Orange500/350
Peas550/350
Pepper (hot)660/400
Pepper (sweet)650/400
Potato400/220
Spinach240/150
String beans700/450
Tomato280/120

Princess meets with Japanese delegation

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Basma Monday met with a Japanese delegation representing the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), according to a Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) statement.

The meeting dealt with cooperation between Jordanian and Japanese development institutions, enhancement of women's participation in the development process and family planning issues.

The Japanese delegates stressed their willingness to develop further ties with Jordan and train Jordanian cadres in various development fields, the statement said.

A three-year project in the field of family planning and the role of women in development to be implemented jointly by QAF, the National Population Com-

mittee (NPC), the Ministry of Health, and JICA was reviewed during the meeting, which was also attended by members of the QAF board of trustees and the director general of the NPC.

Wisconsin delegation pledges training for business community

AMMAN (J.T.) — U.S. Governor of Wisconsin Tommy Benson and his 14-member delegation left Amman Monday concluding a three-day visit to the Kingdom.

They stated themselves amenable to providing assistance and training to the Jordanian business community. "We are ready to cooperate with Jordan and dispatch instructors to offer training in business transactions with other nations," Martin Steen, a spokesman for the group announced upon their departure. "Similar programmes have been offered by Wisconsin instructors to business communities in Egypt, Bahrain, Israel and the Palestine self-rule areas."

"We are contemplating sending another delegation to Jordan to meet with the Jordanian business community and help attract investments," he said.

He affirmed that this could be accomplished through Peace Corps members, who offer free training to developing nations helping them bolster links with their counterparts worldwide.

Meetings with HRH Crown Prince Hassan as well as representatives from the public and private sectors demonstrated that the Jordanian economy has the potential to overcome present challenges especially as it follows the market economy, peace and economic development, Mr. Steen explained.

The delegation met with the Crown Prince and Jordanian business community to discuss possibilities of trade and economic exchanges between Wisconsin and Jordan, he stated.

He described the visit as successful and serving as a primary step to bolster bilateral ties based on mutual respect.

The group included pharmaceuticals, mining, industry and real estate representatives of major American companies.

Prince Hassan affirmed that investment in human resources development constitutes the best impetus to build peace in the Middle East and he urged the United States to deal with the Middle East as an integrated unit within the framework of the global economy.

Court postpones criminal cases

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — New developments have surfaced in two cases, currently being tried at the Amman Criminal Court.

In the case of former Deputy Ahmad Owidi Abbadi, and former editor of the weekly tabloid Shihan Jihad Momani, both charged with sowing societal division, Judge Tawfiq Quessey decided to indefinitely postpone the case as Mr. Momani's attorney failed to appear in court.

Charges against the two by the Amman prosecutor include: undermining national unity, inciting people to criminal acts and fuelling bigotry.

In August, the two men pleaded not guilty. Dr. Abbadi charged that Shihan inserted statements unspoken by him, while Mr. Momani claimed that he was not the editor in charge when the article was published.

A case was filed by Attorney Ahmad Habboul, following the publication of an interview with Dr. Abbadi in June of 1996. Attorney Habboul charged that Dr. Abbadi's statements in the interview were racist and undermined national unity.

The Amman Criminal Court also decided to postpone the case of 17 people, including two women, some of them accused of embezzling huge amounts of money from a bank in Amman as well as a financially troubled state-owned industrial company, to May 12.

Presiding Judge Issam Abu Ghneim decided to postpone the case as two of the 17 defendants failed to appear in court.

Charges filed by Amman Prosecutor Ahmad Harashsh against the 17 defendants include: embezzlement, forgery, abuse of trust, using forged documents, and aiding and abetting embezzlement and forgery.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, the company involved is reported to have incurred a loss of more than JD 15 million since it commenced operations in the early '80s.

The alleged embezzled funds were taken from the account of the company in the bank. The bank, whose executives had a role in managing of the company, has reportedly incurred huge losses in investments in several industrial and commercial ventures.

Premier calls for enhancement of role of tourist personnel

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday called for a greater role on the part of tourist guides and other personnel involved in the tourism and antiquities sector to promote tourism and safeguard Jordan's national and cultural heritage.

During a visit to the Department of Antiquities, the premier met with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Aql Biltaji and senior assistants.

Dr. Majali maintained that competent and qualified personnel can highlight the Kingdom's culture.

Their labour cannot but promote the marketing of archaeological sites around the country, he said.

During the meeting Mr. Biltaji outlined ministry programmes and plans to protect national antiquities and artefacts.

The minister also spoke of plans to stimulate domestic tourism and attract foreign visitors.

Urging the ministry to pursue efforts and implement plans and programmes set by the previous administration, Dr. Majali maintained that the shift of ministers does not imply modifications to previous plans and programmes.

Dr. Majali stated that an inflated administration is not caused by a large number of employees but rather is due to failure to promote their roles and improve their performance.

"Civil servants are to offer public service and not to act as masters giving orders," the prime minister said.

"All employees whether in senior or junior posts ought to demonstrate mutual respect," he added. "They should

extend this respect to the public."

He urged ministry officials to arrange for weekly meetings during which they could initiate dialogue regarding general policies and services offered through their respective departments and present proposals for reform and improvement.

Department of Antiquities Director Ghazi Bishe was present at the meeting.

Subsequent to the meeting the Ministry of Tourism announced plans to implement a comprehensive national rehabilitation programme which would benefit tourist guides in all tourist and archaeological sites.

The programme will start in early June, according to a ministry statement.

The decision was taken following a meeting of the ministry's technical committee, chaired by Mr. Biltaji, to discuss, evaluate and appraise tourist guide services to visitors, the statement reported.

It described the rehabilitation programme as needed to upgrade the skills of tourist guides.

The ministry also announced the creation of a special committee chaired by Mr. Biltaji and grouping representatives of the Department of Antiquities and the University of Jordan to help develop a curriculum and training courses for guides at the university.

Dr. Biltaji outlined plans to establish a special library for tourist guides in the Petra region to be supervised by the Petra Regional Council (PRC).

Majali discusses plight of Palestinian refugees with Canadian official

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday described the Palestinian refugee question as only solvable once the Palestinian people have obtained a political identity.

This can only occur when the Palestinians establish an independent state on their national soil, he said.

In a meeting with visiting former Canadian Ambassador to Jordan and refugee coordinator at the multilateral

phase of the Middle East peace process Andrew Robinson, the prime minister maintained that Jordan highly values the role played by Canada which heads a working group on the refugees.

He also praised that country's readiness to provide assistance to the displaced people of Palestine and called for the global community to exert greater efforts to help reach a solution to the refugee dilemma.

Dr. Majali and Mr. Robinson reviewed the general situation in the occupied territories as well as obstacles hindering the peace process.

Lauding Jordanian efforts to procure a solution for the refugees, the majority of whom live in Jordan, Mr. Robinson maintained that the such issues can be resolved within the framework of the peace process.

Girl accidentally shoots infant sister

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A one-year-old child was accidentally shot and killed by her older sister Monday in Tafleh, according to Public Security Department (PSD) reports.

The victim, Iman Mizel was killed by a bullet to the head, the report said, adding that her 10-year old sister Reem was playing with the weapon when the bullet was fired.

It quoted the father of the children as stating that he was sleeping in his tent in

Al Hassa area, when he was awakened by a gunshot.

"When I went to check on the matter, I saw my 10-year old daughter Reem, holding my rifle and my younger child bleeding," the father said, according to the report.

PSD statistics reported 23 incidents of accidental killings last year. According to the statistics, playing with weapons topped the accidental killings list, involving 56.3 per cent of the total cases.

Carelessness in handling weapons, celebratory shooting during weddings

and accidental shootings, represented 13.04 per cent of the 23 cases each, according to PSD statistics.

Meanwhile, in other accidents in the Kingdom Monday, four people were killed in three separate road accidents, official reports said.

In Irbid, a 45-year old man identified as Tharwat Mohammad, was killed after being hit by a pick-up truck.

PSD traffic officials said that the pick-up truck driver, Qassem Mohammad, 50, was at fault for failing to yield to a pedestrian.

Also in Irbid, two people

were killed when the vehicle in which they were riding collided with another car on Hatem Road, PSD reports said.

It identified the deceased as Ahmad Fandi, 76, and Faweh Mohammad, 65.

In Aqaba, a 34-year-old tank truck driver, identified as Maher Dweimeh, was killed when his vehicle struck another tank truck on the Amman-Aqaba Highway, reports said.

Last year, more than 33,000 road accidents in the Kingdom claimed the lives of 552 people and injured an additional 15,375.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

"To Be the Best" (pt. II) at the British Council, Jabel Amman at 6:00 p.m.

"Danish Film 'Billy the Invader' at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabel Amman at 7:00 p.m.

BALLET

"Ballet dances by students of the Ahllyeh School for Girls at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the National Music Conservatory (NMC)/Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) and the Embassy of Switzerland in Jordan, in cooperation with Zepter International, will present a unique display of the art of pantomime featuring the Swiss Paravento Theatre Company.

They will perform the satiric play "Cases of Hunger and Love" on April 21 at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), an NMC statement said.

Through the splendid, elegant, hilarious and pathetic language that is used in the art of pantomime, "Cases of Hunger and Love" attempts to tackle the theme of finding creativity in poverty and understanding the casual connection that links these two themes of human life, the statement said.

Founded in 1982, the Paravento Theatre Com-



The Swiss Paravento Theatre Company, renowned for improvisation and pantomime, is to perform at the Royal Cultural Centre on April 21

pany is a permanent group which bases its work on a variety of expressive techniques: pantomime, clowning traditional Italian theatre, silent film acting,

the creation of original texts by means of improvisation, and the presentation of plays by well-known playwrights.

The company has performed in Switzerland, Italy, Germany, France, Austria, Spain, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Canada, Peru, Chile and Cuba, the statement said.

Euro-Mediterranean conference to open today in Malta

By Ghalia Ahl
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The second Euro-Mediterranean conference will start in Malta today, emphasising the significance of creating a common area of peace and stability in the region.

The conference, which will bring together the foreign ministers of 12 Mediterranean and 15 European countries, aims to assess the progress achieved by the Barcelona Declaration, adopted in November of 1995.

According to a statement provided by the Delegation of the European Commission in Jordan plans to institutionalise mechanisms to promote and preserve security in the region will be discussed.

The statement added that a network of political and security correspondents and foreign policy institutes has been created.

An action plan was also prepared with the aim of

strengthening democracy, preventive diplomacy, security and confidence building measures, disarmament as well as dissuading terrorism and organised crime.

"The Euro-Mediterranean partnership "does not aim to replace existing mechanisms to bring about peace, but rather to contribute to their success. The political dialogue has been maintained even at times when the situation in the Middle East or the eastern Mediterranean has been particularly tense," the statement said.

The Malta conference aims at creating long-term stability based on three pillars: a political and security dialogue emphasising human rights; economic and financial cooperation; and strengthening the link among the peoples of the region to help foster the values of civil society.

The MEDA democracy programme was initiated last year with a budget of nine million European Cur-

rency Units (ECUs) in a bid to promote democracy, the rule of law, civil and socio-economic rights as well as protect vulnerable groups.

The programme grants subsidies to non-profit associations, universities, research centres and public bodies.

Sixty-two projects have been approved in the region, the majority of which are linked to human and civil rights, youth and the media.

"In Jordan, the MEDA democracy is to spend 187,000 ECUs so that the Jordanian National Forum for Women, the Jordanian National Committee for Women and Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre can organise seminars and conferences," the statement said. "These are to be attended by a total of 120,000 women, to inform them of their rights and legal obligations and thus to seek to increase their role in political and economic life."

According to the statement, the Euro-Mediterranean partners have begun to harmonise their economic policies. This process, the statement added, has involved industry, the information field, energy and local water management.

"The regional dialogue of 27 partners is undoubtedly one of the most innovative aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. It helps partners accustom themselves to working together, whether in the public or private sector, at the national or local levels," the statement maintained.

In the spirit of the Barcelona Declaration, the statement continued, the European Commission has been supporting efforts aimed at the creation of Euro-Mediterranean networks. The goal of these networks, it added, is to facilitate mutual understanding, practical exchanges and cooperation between institutions of the 27 countries involved.

The EU has adopted the MEDA programme which allocated a budget of 4.6 billion ECUs (\$5.8 billion) in grants for the Mediterranean countries for the year 1996-1999.

The statement reported that in 1995 and 1996, the European Commission (EC) pledged 1,205 million ECUs from its budget and European Investment Bank (EIB) loans were signed for 1.694 million ECUs. An additional 1,002 million ECUs in grants are expected to be committed for 1997, while for future EIB lending it has been agreed that grants could reach 2,310 million ECUs for the period of 1997-1999.

The MEDA programme is targeted towards facilitating economic transition, strengthening the socio-economic balance as well as achieving regional cooperation, the statement said.

European officials earlier said that the MEDA programme, of which 90 per cent has been implemented

between the EU and member countries on an individual basis, provides assistance for economic reforms in eligible countries.

Europeans regard the MEDSTAT Programme for Statistical Cooperation as the most important project under the auspices of EU-Mediterranean economic cooperation.

The project, which joins national statistics with a budget of 20 million ECUs, allows for the launching of collective work and permanent cooperation between concerned institutions over four years.

One of the major priorities for the countries of the southern Mediterranean, the statement said, is the harmonisation of statistics on tourism. Other initiatives are planned for a later date in order to harmonise statistics on external trade, transport, migration and the environment.

Cooperation between civil societies from both sides was described by the

Europeans as an essential element of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

According to the statement, since Barcelona, demands from civil society have been very high.

"Cooperation between participants in civil society from both sides of the Mediterranean has gained great impetus in recent years. It facilitates links between universities, NGOs, professional associations, the media, and particularly, citizens. It allows the development of information exchanges, the transfer of know-how, joint actions, and finally, a better mutual understanding between those having similar roles in their respective countries," the statement said.

In the area of cultural cooperation, the 27 ministers of culture met in Bologna in April of last year and reaffirmed their recognition of respective cultural traditions. They called for strengthening dialogue on joint cultural matters as well as launching concrete projects of a regional nature slated to preserve and exploit cultural heritage.

The Barcelona Declaration called for the establishment of association agreements between the EU and countries of the Mediterranean region.

Partnership agreements were signed with Tunisia in July 1995, Israel in November 1995, Morocco in February 1996 and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in February of this year.

The long-awaited Euro-Jordan partnership agreement will be signed in Malta. Similar agreements are currently being negotiated with Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Algeria.

Food supplies improving but emergencies remain — FAO

ROME (R) — The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) said Monday the world should produce more than enough food in 1997 but large parts of Africa still faced emergencies.

The Rome-based agency said in its regular food outlook that its first forecast for 1997/98 put world cereal output at some 1.880 million tonnes, compared to the record 1.873 million tonnes produced in the previous year.

It said this second good crop was helping to ease an exceptionally tight supply situation due to a poor 1995 harvest.

"If current forecasts materialise, cereal output would be sufficient to meet expected consumption requirements in 1997/98 and may allow for a further replenishment of cereal reserves," the report said.

Cereal output dropped in

1995/96 to 1.726 million tonnes but rose by 8.5 per cent the following year.

Despite the upwards trend in global production, the food situation in much of Africa was threatened by civil unrest and the failure of secondary crops, the FAO said.

The report said deaths from starvation had already been reported in Zaire, where Rwandan Hutus were forced to flee refugee camps into inaccessible areas when rebels took hold of the eastern part of the country earlier this year.

"Their food and nutritional situation has become critical," it said.

Economic sanctions imposed on Burundi by neighbouring countries and a series of crop failures had a damaging effect on its food supply, it added.

The report said emergency food aid was needed to deal with severe food shortages

in the East African states of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda after dry weather caused secondary crop failure.

Kenya was expected to import 800,000 tonnes of coarse grain in 1997 to meet the deficit of its poor crop, up 400,000 tonnes on the previous year.

The agency said countries suffering food deficits would receive 7.5 million tonnes of cereal food aid in 1996/97, representing 10 per cent of their import needs. This was only about half the level of early 1990s aid donations.

The food outlook said there were some positive signs from the region, with improved domestic production in sub-Saharan Africa reducing countries' dependence on wheat and coarse grain imports.

"Wheat imports into sub-Saharan Africa are forecast to decline by 600,000 tonnes, reflecting an im-

proved domestic production in several countries," it said.

Ethiopia, one of the major recipients of international aid over the last decade, had record crops in both wheat and coarse grains, the report said.

The FAO added that Sudan's 1997 wheat crop was expected to yield 630,000 tonnes, up 20 per cent on last year's poor harvest. Coarse grain production in Somalia was up 10 per cent on last year but not yet back to pre-war levels.

Although the situation in Liberia remained precarious after rice production in 1995 fell by some 80 per cent from pre-civil war levels, a lull in fighting could have positive effects on the food supply, the report said.

War-affected farmers in Sierra Leone were benefiting from land rehabilitation programmes following a recent peace accord.

Afghan opposition promise huge summer offensive against Taliban

KABUL (AFP) — Anti-Taliban alliance forces will intensify attacks against the fundamentalist militia with the aim of retaking the Afghan capital by the end of the year, a spokesman told AFP Monday.

Speaking from the Panjshir Valley stronghold of ousted government military chief Ahmad Shah Masood, the spokesman vowed the coming spring weather would see massive strikes against the Taliban on all fronts.

"If you are talking about this year, yes, the Taliban will have to leave Kabul," asserted Masood-aided Abdullah in a satellite telephone interview.

Mr. Abdullah said current opposition guerrilla activities in provinces east of Kabul were only in their early stages and were preparations for the ousting of the Muslim militia from the Afghan capital.

"It is still two to three more weeks before the weather improves, but when the bad weather is over we can begin our summer campaign," Mr. Abdullah said.

But Mr. Abdullah revealed the joint anti-Taliban strategy — hammered out in a weekend meet between opposition leaders — will not include a direct attack on Kabul itself.

"The fighting in the eastern provinces — Kunar, Nangarhar and Laghman —

will become widespread, and conventional attacks in the northwest and centre will also be launched," he said.

"But what we can promise is that we will not rocket Kabul or impose street by street fighting. Our strategy is to put pressure on Taliban so they have no choice but to leave," he added.

The Taliban seized Kabul from ex-President Burhanuddin Rabbani last September, after a blitzkrieg-style advance that left the Afghan capital almost completely surrounded.

Mr. Masood withdrew from war-torn Kabul and retreated into his native Panjshir Valley 85 kilometres north from here, a base from which he used to fight the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989.

Taliban ambitions to grab the north of the country also gave Mr. Masood an opportunity to form an alliance with bitter rivals ethnic-Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum and a Shi'ite party based in central Afghanistan.

But despite losing Kabul, Mr. Abdullah said the Taliban victory has proved a propaganda coup for the opposition.

"By coming into Kabul the reality of the Taliban has been revealed to the world," he lamented. "They have turned Kabul into a concentration camp. What

sort of a security is this?"

Mr. Abdullah said the opposition had no choice but to fight the Taliban, leaving little hope for U.N. peace efforts aimed at ending Afghanistan's 17 years of war.

"We are not insisting on force, but the Taliban leave us with no choice. If they are liked by the people we will not fight them any more," he said.

Mr. Abdullah also claimed the progress of current guerrilla activity was positive.

"In Kunar province Asmar district was liberated yesterday and our Mujahideen are also advancing on Mahmud-e-Raqi (the capital of Kapisa province)."

Mr. Abdullah also said the main highway linking Asadabad, the provincial capital of Kunar, and Jalalabad in Nangarhar province had been cut.

No independent confirmation of the attacks were available, and Taliban sources here have denied any losses, saying they have "foiled" each attack by what they dub an "evil and corruption alliance."

As well as launching guerrilla strikes in eastern Afghanistan, the opposition are facing Taliban forces, who now control around two-thirds of Afghanistan, in the north-western province of Badghis and close to the central Shi'ite stronghold of Bamian.

Suu Kyi urges courage at Burmese New Year

Rangoon (R) — Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi Monday urged in the Burmese New Year by urging her political party to be courageous and steadfast in its efforts to bring democracy back to Burma.

"At the transition to the New Year, we the National League for Democracy (NLD) have resolved to go on striving with renewed courage and spirit until we achieve our ambition," Ms. Suu Kyi said in a speech at a ceremony to mark traditional Burmese New Year.

About 700 NLD members and supporters were allowed through several police barricades in order to attend the celebration at the 1991 Nobel Peace laureate's lakeside home.

The Burmese New Year festival, or Maha Thingyan, is a rare occasion the military government allows public gatherings but security has been tight in the capital after recent unrest by Buddhist monks and a parcel bombing earlier this month which killed the daughter of a top official.

Ms. Suu Kyi, who has lived virtually incommunicado from her supporters recently, told the crowd they could not give up the fight and urged them to keep backing the NLD no matter what happened. Her telephone line appears to have been cut and barricades on the street normally bar access to her home.

The ceremony, held on the grounds that served as Ms. Suu Kyi's prison during six years of house arrest from 1989-1995, was mainly aimed at raising funds for the families of party members in jail.

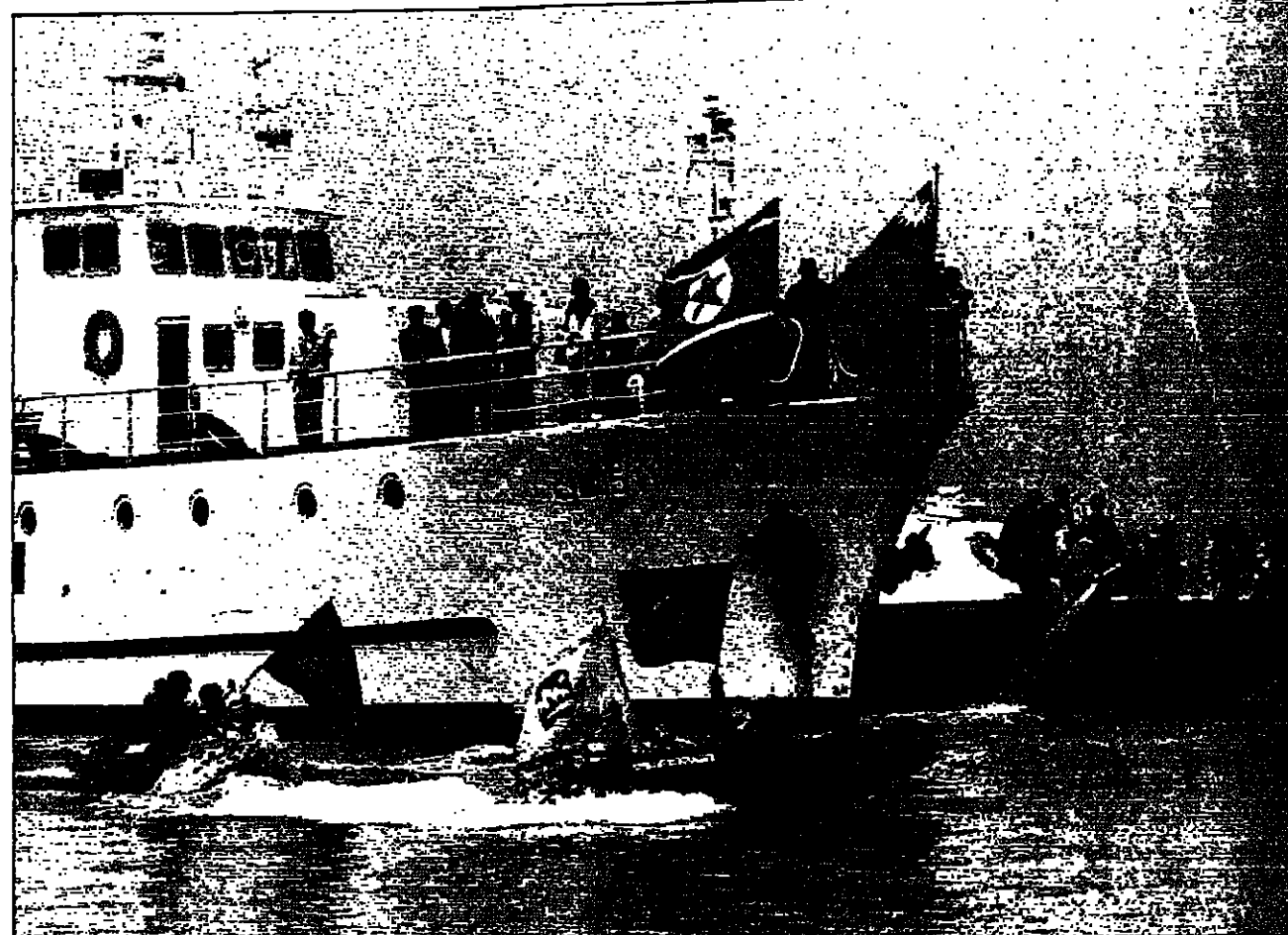
"The main purpose for holding today's ceremony is to raise funds for the political prisoners," Ms. Suu Kyi said, noting that the NLD would never forget those who had made sacrifices for the cause of democracy.

Tables were set up around the large bamboo meeting hall to accept donations. Proceeds of sales of NLD souvenirs were earmarked for prisoners and their families.

Dozens of old members and elected members of parliament are in jail for various offences, mostly politically related.

Ms. Suu Kyi told reporters last month that the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) had been increasing its "repression" and intimidation tactics against the NLD.

The NLD won a landslide victory in a 1990 election but was never allowed to rule.



South Korean environmentalists aboard dozens of small boats rally towards a vessel flying Taiwanese and North Korean flags Monday off the southwest Korean port of Mokpo during an anti-Taiwanese demonstration. They were protesting Taiwan's plan to ship nuclear waste to North Korea with the decorated ship, part of the protest, symbolising one that will actually transport the nuclear waste (Reuters photo)

S. Koreans protest Taiwan nuclear shipment plans

MOKPO, South Korea (R) — Environmental protesters aboard fishing boats and dinghies staged an exercise off South Korea Monday aimed at blocking any effort by Taiwan to ship nuclear waste to North Korea.

Some 200 activists, mostly members of the Korean Federation for Environmental Movement, were in the flotilla that surrounded a vessel representing a waste ship, witnesses said.

It was the latest in a series of protests since January,

when state-run Taiwan Power Co. announced a deal to ship 200,000 barrels of low grade radioactive nuclear waste to impoverished North Korea.

South Korea has launched an international campaign to block the deal, saying it threatens the entire Korean peninsula since North Korea lacks the technology to safely handle the waste.

Former Greenpeace activist Bruce Abraham, 51, helped organise Monday's exercise off the southwest

port of Mokpo along a route that any waste vessel would be likely to follow, federation officials said.

At a joint news conference with Greenpeace Friday, the federation said a sea blockade would be a last resort.

"If Taiwan is truly concerned about the people of North Korea they will send food, not radioactive waste," the groups said in a statement.

Despite international criticism, Taipei insists its nuclear deal is strictly a business affair and would go ahead as long as international standards on waste shipment were met.

Taiwan power has not disclosed financial terms of the deal, but Taiwan media have said the utility agreed to pay Pyongyang \$1,150 for each barrel of waste.

Taiwan has no diplomatic ties with either North or South Korea, both of which recognise Beijing.

N. Korea's Kim Jong-Il reshuffles military

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il swept 123 new generals into his military command, Pyongyang announced Monday, paving the way to formally taking up the reins of absolute power in the starving Communist state.

"Comrade Kim Jong-Il, supreme commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA), Sunday issued an order of raising military ranks of KPA commanding officers," the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

The promotions came on the 85th birthday of late President Kim Il-Sung, who ruled the world's most reclusive state for 46 years until his death in 1994, and the 65th anniversary of the KPA, it said.

It was the largest military shake-up since the late president's death.

Kim Il-Chol, Jon Jae-Son, Pak Ki-So and Ri Jong-San were promoted to army vice marshals, Jong Chang-Ryol to general, eight others to colonel generals, 37 to lieutenant generals and 73 to major generals, KCNA said.

The junior Kim, who has yet to formally assume his father's twin posts of state president and general secretary of the Ruling Workers Party, has promoted an elite group of new generation officers to tighten his grip on the military.

Kim Il-Chol, a former navy commander, was named as first vice defence minister, replacing Kim Kwang-Jin who died in February this year, the South's official monitoring agency Naewoo press said.

With the defence minister's post still vacant, the new vice minister is in charge of the North's 1.1 million-strong armed forces.

But analysts saw Kim Il-Chol's promotion as an indication that the uncrowned North Korean leader was still relying on the same generation that served his father.

"Kim Jong-Il is trying to cement his position before he is expected to assume full power," said Kang In-Duk, an analyst at the Institute for East Asian Studies in Seoul.

It was the second military reshuffle in the North this year. In February four generals were promoted to mark the junior Kim's 55th birthday on Feb. 16.

The latest shake-up has been expected since the disappearance of former Defence Minister Choe Kwang, who died in February, and other North Korean military leaders this year.

The delay in naming a new North Korean defence chief had prompted speculation that the junior Kim needed more time to solicit full support from the military.

South Korea's Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-Ha said Sunday the junior Kim faced a "serious slackening" of discipline because of an economic calamity and widespread famine.

"North Korea is also experiencing a serious slackening of discipline. Its ideological foundations are faltering," Mr. Yoo said.

He said the North's trouble was highlighted by Pyongyang's highest-ranking defector, Hwang Jang-Yop, who sought asylum in Beijing on Feb. 12 and is in a secret Philippine location on his way to Seoul.

North Korea reported for the first time last week that 134 children had died of malnutrition, and recent Western visitors to the North said they saw signs of mass starvation among the North's 22-million population.

The reshuffle comes as North Korea prepares to sit down at a deputy-minister level meeting with South Korea and the United States in New York to consider entering peace negotiations.

Looming over the three-way talks, to be held Wednesday, is a food crisis that could threaten millions of people with starvation, according to some outside observers.

U.S. senators warned last week that failure to provide humanitarian assistance to the North could result in its military action.

Japan says Pyongyang may have deployed missiles

TOKYO (R) — Japan's foreign minister highlighted North Korea's potential threat to East Asia Monday by quoting unconfirmed reports that Pyongyang may have deployed ballistic missiles capable of hitting most of Japan.

Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda told a parliamentary committee discussing U.S. military bases that there were unconfirmed reports that North Korea had deployed some of its Rodong-1 ballistic missiles.

"It is not that we confirmed this," Mr. Ikeda said, "but there are reports that (North Korea) has developed missiles with a range of more than 1,000 kilometres. There are certain re-

ports that some of them have been deployed."

It is the first time a Japanese government official has commented publicly on the possibility that North Korea may have completed development of the Rodong-1 missile and deployed some of them — one of Japan's biggest security concerns.

Mr. Ikeda refused to reveal the source of his information.

But Japan's NHK public television reported last Friday that U.S. spy satellites had detected three Rodong-1 missiles on mobile launchers in position on North Korea's Eastern Coast.

NHK, quoting U.S. intelligence sources, said seven

more Rodong-1 missiles were being prepared for deployment.

The London-based Institute of International Strategic Studies, in its "military balance 1996-1997" published last October, said North Korea was moving to deploy the Rodong-1 missiles in late 1996 or early 1997.

The missiles have been one of Japan's biggest security headaches since May 1993, when North Korea test-fired a Rodong-1 into the Sea of Japan just off its coast.

Japan's 1996 defence white paper said: "North Korea's missile development, together with its suspected nuclear weapons development, constitutes a

factor that could bring instability not only to the region surrounding Japan but also to the entire international community. Japan therefore has a serious concern."

After a sharp row with the United States, North Korea accepted a U.S. initiative in 1994 to scrap its graphite-based nuclear power plants in favour of light-water reactors, to be supplied by a U.S.-led consortium, that are less suitable for producing weapons-grade plutonium.

North Korea has denied it was developing nuclear weapons but has insisted it has the right to develop and deploy missiles. It has never publicly displayed the Rodong-1.

President rejects link to Bhutto murder charge

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — President Farooq Ahmad Leghari Monday dismissed a claim by former Premier Benazir Bhutto that she has been implicated in a murder case on his orders, a presidential spokesman said.

Describing the allegations as a "pack of lies," the spokesman said Ms. Bhutto had been trying to malign Mr. Leghari by making "trivial and nonsensical charges" against him since

he dismissed her government last November.

The murder charge involving Ms. Bhutto was registered by the Karachi police Thursday on a complaint from Shoaib Bokhari, a leader of the ethnic-based Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), which had been at loggerheads with her government.

Mr. Bokhari accused Ms. Bhutto and two former ministers of involvement in a

1995 "conspiracy" leading to the alleged murders of two close relatives of MQM chief, Altaf Hussain.

Mr. Hussain's brother and a nephew were killed amid prolonged unrest in Karachi during Ms. Bhutto's three-year rule, which ended with her dismissal by Mr. Leghari for alleged corruption and misuse.

Ms. Bhutto, currently on a private visit to London has reportedly blamed Mr.

Leghari for implicating her in the murder.

Her Pakistan People's Party (PPP), calling the charge an act of political victimisation, has demanded the case be withdrawn.

PPP senior vice chairman Aftab Sherpao, accusing Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of backpedalling on his pledge not to indulge in a political vendetta, said Ms. Bhutto would not bow to "pressures."

Yeltsin did not authorise arms to Armenia — Kremlin

MOSCOW (R) — The Kremlin said Monday neither President Boris Yeltsin nor his government had authorised Russian arms supplies to Armenia that have angered Yerevan's Transcaucasus neighbour and foe, Azerbaijan.

The transfer of Russian arms from 1993 to 1996 helped Armenians fighting Azeris in a conflict that killed tens of thousands of people before a truce was agreed in 1994.

Mr. Yeltsin's press office said an investigation by the presidential administration had shown the arms were supplied without the permission of the government or the president.

"It was established that neither the head of state nor the Russian government issued any decisions allowing supplies of arms and military equipment to Armenia," the presidential press office said in a statement.

"At the same time, analysis of documents obtained (during the investigation) showed that some of the equipment and weapons were shipped in violation of rules set by presidential decrees and orders."

Lev Rokhlin, head of the State Duma lower house of parliament's Defence Committee, told closed hearings earlier this month that Russia had supplied Armenia with up to \$1 billion worth of arms from 1993 to 1996.

He said the shipments included tanks, anti-aircraft missiles and a large quantity of ammunition.

Mr. Rokhlin accused Russian military officials of handing over the arms to Armenians illegally, bypassing parliament.

Azerbaijan, which is locked in a protracted territorial conflict with Armenia, denounced the arms supplies as a move which could destabilise the situation in the volatile Transcaucasus region.

Azeri leaders have demanded that Russia take back its arms from Armenia. Tens of thousands of people were killed after an age-old conflict flared in the late 1980s over Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian-populated region which wants independence from Azerbaijan.

Mr. Yeltsin's press office said that data recovered during the checks had been handed over to the prosecutors' office for further investigation.

Meanwhile, seven Azeri soldiers were killed and one was wounded when Armenian forces opened fire near their border with Azerbaijan, the local Respublika Armenia newspaper reported Saturday.

The report quoting an Armenian Defence Ministry spokesperson said the shooting occurred after an armed group of Azeri soldiers crossed the southeastern Armenian-Azeri border.

Several Azeris escaped but seven were killed and one was wounded. There were no casualties among the Armenians, the report said.



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Zairean troops shoot into crowd as strike paralyses Kinshasa

KINSHASA (AFP) — Zairean troops Monday shot into a crowd of demonstrators here as a one-day opposition strike against President Mobutu Sese Seko brought the capital Kinshasa to a standstill.

Troops charged opposition demonstrators gathered outside the house of opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who called the stay-at-home strike to press for Mr. Mobutu to resign.

The troops shot in the air to disperse the small crowd and, in at least one case, a soldier was seen kneeling and shooting directly at those fleeing. There were no injuries.

Some 50 troops who arrived in a truck were seen detaining some demonstrators.

The troops also briefly detained journalists at the scene, including an AFP reporter, but after verifying that they did not have weapons let them leave.

One journalist was seen being driven off in a truck full of soldiers but was apparently later released.

The strike was taking place in Kinshasa and in the five of 11 provinces the government still controls in the central African state. Rebels have since October seized the eastern half of Zaire in a drive to unseat Mr. Mobutu.

Elsewhere in Kinshasa, stores were closed but small markets were open. Small groups of soldiers, in two or four, were standing at strategic sites and corners.

The political ferment in the capital, which last week led to the replacement of then Prime Minister Tshisekedi with a general, Likulia Bolongo, is a dangerous second front for Mr. Mobutu.

The political opposition led by Mr. Tshisekedi called the general strike Monday to force Mr. Mobutu to relinquish power.

High school and university students are to strike Tuesday, according to reports.

Pro-Tshisekedi protests last Wednesday were brutally suppressed, under a state of emergency decreed by Mr. Mobutu.

Deputy Interior Minister Lumuna Ndubu said Sunday that the government saw the opposition call for a demonstration as "not in the interests of the population, which lives from day to day."

The call from Mr. Tshisekedi's Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), the main opposition party, came as Mr. Mobutu rejected a rebel demand that he open talks with them before midnight Saturday on conditions for standing down.

The UDPS distributed leaflets urging people living in

Kimbantseke district near the airport east of the capital to move at least 20 kilometres from the area "in readiness for an attack by the rebels of Laurent-Désiré Kabila" whose forces now control half the country.

Kinshasa's governor, General Amela Lokima Bahati, appealed for calm on television over the weekend, after rebel leader Kabila said his men were within 300 kilometres of the capital.

"I ask the residents of Kinshasa, Zairean or expatriate, to keep calm and not to give in to disinformation. The security of the city is our priority," Gen. Amela said, warning people to "be vigilant and bring anything suspicious to the attention of the competent authorities."

On reading the leaflets, many people in Kimbantseke left their homes to seek refuge in neighbouring districts.

Six Japanese left Kinshasa Sunday as part of an evacuation called for by the Japanese embassy, embassy chargé d'affaires Serumi Okamoto said.

It was apparently the first time in the Zairean crisis that an embassy has urged all its nationals to leave the country.

A Chinese woman Catherine Chan evacuated with the Japanese told reporters: "Yeah, we're afraid. We're frightened. We don't know what will happen."

"The situation really is deteriorating every day," she said. Meanwhile, Zairean rebels said Monday they had captured the town of Kananga, capital of western Kasai province and one of the largest towns outside Kinshasa that was still in government hands.

Kananga fell to rebel forces Saturday, said Voice of the People radio broadcast from the eastern town of Gombe, rebel headquarters.

"Kasembalela (on the Zambian border) and Kananga were taken by the alliance on Friday 11 and Saturday 12 respectively," the radio said. There was no independent confirmation.

"The fall of Kananga leaves the alliance in a good position to move on Bandundu whose people are eagerly awaiting liberation," the radio said. Bandundu is only 270 kilometres northeast of Kinshasa.

There was little looting at Kananga because of the vigilance of inhabitants who welcomed rebels, the radio said.

Zaire government troops, former Rwandan government soldiers and extremist Interahamwe militiamen fled 125 kilometres west to Kananga after their defeat at the diamond capital Mbuji-Mayi, which fell to rebels on April 5, witnesses said.

mission statement said.

Two thirds of Britain's 3,000-man force here are crew members of Illustrious.

The British naval contingent left home in January as part of Ocean Wave '97, which is visiting 34 countries and taking part in 26 exercises.

Ocean Wave is intended to show that Britain continues to have security interests in the region after it hands back Hong Kong to China

at midnight on June 30, British diplomats said.

Part of the British Naval Force will take part in a training exercise with the Royal Brunei Air Force after Flying Fish.

Britain said it plans to keep a Gurkha Battalion in Brunei after the Hong Kong handover and is selling Brunei at least a dozen Hawk jet fighters and two frigate-class warships.

months following more acrimony between the United Front and Congress, Ms. Swaraj said: "Yes."

The policy-making Congress working committee was set to meet in New Delhi at 7 p.m. (1330 GMT) Monday.

Mr. Gadgil said Congress President Sitaram Kesri would have no difficulty satisfying a United Front demand that he withdraw a letter to President Shankar Dayal Sharma revoking Congress support for the United Front and staking a claim to power.

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Tudjman party moves ahead of rivals in key capital vote

ZAGREB (R) — Croatian President Franjo Tudjman's Nationalist Party has beaten an opposition coalition by a razor-thin margin in key elections for the city assembly of the capital Zagreb, unofficial returns showed Monday.

Croatians voted for municipal and county assemblies across the country Sunday and polls had suggested that the Social Democrats and Social Liberals, riding economic grievances, could upset the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in some big cities.

But with 610 of 615 polling stations counted in Zagreb, the HDZ emerged the largest single vote getter at 34.9 per cent to 34.5 for a bloc of Social Democrats (SDP), who tallied 23.9 per cent and the centrist Social Liberals (HSL) with 10.5.

The result seemed inconclusive but may be enough for the HDZ to cling to power, possibly by luring compatible small parties into the regional government for a viable majority.

Zagreb was the grand prize in the elections since it has a third of Croatia's population, half the industrial economy, a major chunk of taxation and a powerful patronage machine.

Unofficial returns on voting for 21 county assemblies released by state television showed the HDZ cruising to easy reelection in almost all, including Zagreb's rural belt.

Serbs in the former rebel enclave of Eastern Slavonia took part in a Croatian election for the first time. But voting in the region, now under transitional U.N. administration, was extended to Monday to make up for initial technical delays.

Final results in eastern Slavonia, where Serbs were expected to back an ethnic party bloc to protect minority rights after the enclave reverts to central Croatian authority this summer, will not be available until later in the week.

Unofficial totals for the rest of the country were expected by late Monday.

In Zagreb, the SDP improved on its 18.6 per cent performance in 1995 but the HSLs, weakened by leadership squabbles, slipped from 13 per cent, dashing their hope of a decisive joint victory over the Nationalists Sunday.

The SDP and HSLs led a loose, seven-party bloc to victory over the HDZ in Zagreb's 1995 vote. But Mr. Tudjman vetoed four opposition mayoral nominees on "national security" grounds and imposed provisional HDZ rule.

His manoeuvre brought accusations of authoritarianism and was condemned in the West. Mr. Tudjman argued the HDZ had won a "relative majority" while the opposition was an unstable mishmash of parties ranging from far left to far right.

Mr. Tudjman said Sunday's overall election outcome "confirms we are the central, strongest party in Croatian history... Anyone who is against the HDZ is against sovereign Croatia."

The former Communist general and his HDZ led Croatia in a successful 1991 war for independence from Serbian-led federal Yugoslavia. The HDZ relied heavily on his enduring charisma as "father of the nation" in the latest election campaign.

HDZ popularity has slipped to the 30-35 per cent range in the past two years over corruption and insensitivity to Croats who have fallen on financial hard times as the formerly Socialist economy has been privatised.

Mr. Tudjman has been criticised by the opposition and Western officials for his personalised style of rule and the HDZ's attempts to isolate rivals through its stranglehold on the mainstream news media.

Taiwan says no asylum for China judge

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan said Monday it would not grant asylum to a Chinese judge who sneaked ashore on a Taiwan-controlled island near the mainland, reinforcing a recent policy of not fleeing defectors from China.

Taipei nevertheless said it might help defector Zheng Chunteng seek sanctuary in a third country if it deemed he faced life-threatening punishment back on the Communist mainland.

"By sneaking ashore illegally, Zheng Chunteng has already lost the eligibility to seek legal residence," Johnsson Liu, legal director of the cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council, told the state-run central news agency.

"We will seek to understand the situation better. If Mr. Zheng's life may be threatened back on the mainland, we will consider seeking the help of a third country through a human rights organisation," Mr. Liu said.

Mr. Liu did not say which country or organisation Taiwan might ask for assistance.

Mr. Zheng, identified as an assistant judge in a local Fujian province court, took a fishing boat to the shore of the Taiwan-controlled islet of Wuchiu off Fujian early Monday.

Police authorities from Taiwan's outlying island of Quemoy, which holds jurisdiction over Wuchiu, said Mr. Zheng was in a Wuchiu Detention Centre awaiting further decisions on his fate.

"He probably will be sent to Taiwan eventually for authorities to decide what to do with him, but right now he is still in Wuchiu," a police officer told Reuters.

Though still at political loggerheads with China after a civil war split them in 1949, Taiwan in recent years has dropped a cold-war policy of hailing defectors from the Communist mainland — many of them hijackers — as heroes.

Unlike earlier defectors who were showered with gold, 16 mainland hijackers who commandeered planes to Taiwan in the 1990s have been convicted of air piracy and imprisoned. They face probable extradition to the mainland once paroled.

Taiwan said in March it planned to send back two paroled hijackers even though a cross-strait repatriation agreement negotiated in 1995 remains unsigned.

China, likewise, has said it planned to extradite a Taiwan journalist who forced a commercial plane to China in March and sought asylum on the mainland.

Denmark's challenge to China human rights looks doomed

GENEVA (AFP) — Denmark will confront China here Tuesday over its human rights record in a David vs. Goliath duel the ramifications of which go beyond the simple adoption or rejection of non-binding recommendations for Beijing.

The credibility of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, the difficulties of fixing a common European policy on the issue, and China's place in the international community all loom behind the battle which will be played out by the commission's 53 member countries meeting here for their annual session.

Copenhagen took the initiative Thursday to propose a resolution criticising violations of human rights by China after a veto from France shattered the consensus within the European Union.

A similar resolution has been presented to the commission by the EU every year since the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing in 1989, but each time China has managed to garner just enough support — notably from developing countries — to avoid formal censure.

The United States and 13 other countries, including nine from the European Union, have given their backing to the Danish text.

But besides France, Australia, Canada, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan and Spain which had all previously criticised Beijing's tough policies have opted not to back the proposed resolution this year.

Kashmir shelling ends after six days — defence official

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Cross-border shelling in Kashmir ended Monday after a six-day artillery duel between India and Pakistan, an Indian Defence Ministry spokesman said.

Spokesman S. Prashant said the shelling, which sparked off an exodus of civilians from frontier Kashmiri villages, ended overnight.

"There has been no shelling of civilians in the Kargil township since late last night," he said but added tension remained as sporadic firing on military bunkers continued.

Three people — two men and a child — died in the Indian-administered part of the region during the shelling.

Unconfirmed reports put the toll at four.

The police said around 5,000 Indians evacuated from five frontier villages in the Kargil sector have been advised not to return to their homes yet.

Indian and Pakistani troops have been on an alert after the first exchanges of fire across the heavily-militarised Line-Of-Control (LOC), which divides Kashmir into two parts, began on April 9.

The Indian spokesman accused Pakistani troops of "deliberately" targeting the civilian population, claiming some two dozen buildings had been destroyed in Kargil.

Hollywood women's group closes in protest

LOS ANGELES (R) — The influential Hollywood Women's Political Committee, made up of executives, writers and stars like Barbra Streisand, has ceased operation to protest the role of money in politics, said a founding member Sunday.

"Money had become the driving force, rather than politics. The richest people are getting to office and we didn't want to be part of it," said Barbara Corday, a television producer and one of the committee's founders.

Ms. Corday said the decision to cease operation was reached Saturday at a board meeting of the committee, which had disbursed nearly \$6 million directly to liberal causes and funds nationwide since it was launched in 1984.

The committee, which fused money, liberal politics and Hollywood celebrities, had grown increasingly disappointed with President Bill Clinton's rightward swing, she said.

"It goes back to the sense that if you can't be part of the solution, you're part of the problem," said Ms. Corday.

She said the organisation was particularly disappointed by Mr. Clinton's and other congressional Democrats' support of last year's welfare reform bill.

"The welfare bill was the turning point," said Ms. Corday.

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Election fever is close

IN HIS press conference earlier this week Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali dismissed a proposal made by the Islamic Action Front (IAF) that Jordanian, Arab and foreign observers be "invited" to monitor the upcoming parliamentary elections. Such a step would be self-incriminating, Dr. Majali argued, and he was right. There is hardly a precedent for international observers to monitor elections in countries living under normal political conditions. There is no emergency situation existing in Jordan that would warrant foreign presence during the casting of ballots. Had the prime minister given a "green light" for Arab or foreign observers to be present during the elections, though, that would have been sufficient to allay any doubts about government intentions on holding fair and free elections.

There was talk by the former government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti about the possibility of asking the judiciary to supervise the polls. While this suggestion has an inbuilt problem, that of leaving no recourse to go back to in cases that might have to be heard in the courts, it is nevertheless an idea that has to be entertained and developed. The executive branch of government would be inviting unnecessary speculation should it opt to monitor the elections alone. Therefore, it is perhaps necessary to appoint an independent commission to oversee the casting of ballots and the counting of votes.

Equally important is the projected "temporary election" law that the prime minister mentioned during his press conference. There are no clear indications yet on the contents of the projected legislation including the issue of the redistribution of the electoral districts in such a way as to accord citizens equal voting powers. Nor was there in fact any hint from the prime minister about the fate of the quota system that we currently follow, be it on gender, religious or ethnic grounds. In the wake of the adoption of the one-person, one-vote formula by Parliament there remain several issues that still await rectification in order to make that electoral criterion sound and solid.

The government should be more forthcoming on these issues as time is short. There are only several weeks left before the country is gripped by an election fever, whose intensity will be greatly affected by such new ground rules as the lowering of the voting age and the number of seats in the Lower House.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily Monday criticised Arab countries which have described meetings held in Washington between the U.S. administration and individual Arab leaders as successful and said that by failing to persuade Israel to desist from its current practices, the U.S. has totally failed to break the deadlock in the peace process. Fahed Fanek said the Arab leaders' claim that the Washington talks were successful is meant for local consumption and is considered misleading to the Arab masses. The writer said perhaps Arab-American talks succeeded in improving bilateral ties, but these talks definitely led nowhere and failed to force the Israeli prime minister to halt his government's settlement plans in the occupied Arab territories. The leaders of Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinians were called to Washington for separate meetings with the U.S. administration in what was considered as a last ditch attempt on the part of Washington to find a solution to the current predicament impeding the peace process, he noted. Had President Clinton enjoyed the courage of the former presidents, he would have demanded that Israel comply with the peace accords, but, said the writer, now that Mr. Clinton has failed in his endeavour, there can be no reason for the Arab governments to continue claiming that the Washington talks achieved any progress in the peace process.

A WRITER for Al Dustour reflected on the Iraqi situation and noted that King Hussein's talks in the U.S. covered this issue and demanded that the embargo be lifted so that the Iraqi people's sufferings can end. Rakan Majali noted that the King, who also met the Saudi ambassador to the U.S., Bandar Ben Sultan, has made it clear that the embargo imposed on Iraq since 1990 is also causing sufferings to Jordan, stressing that the Jordanian transport and industry sectors, as well as the port of Aqaba, are mostly affected by the sanctions, with detrimental consequences for the Jordanian national economy. The writer said that Jordan is seeking solidarity among Arab states and if this solidarity is to be achieved, there can be no alternative to including Iraq which should be once again welcomed into the Arab fold. He said that the current deadlock in the peace process due to Israel's practices can only be addressed through solidarity among Arab states and a close rally of ranks among Arab regimes which, said the writer, should transcend their petty differences and pool their efforts towards ending the sufferings of the Iraqi and Palestinian people.

The View from Fourth Circle

Will the 'modernity' debate lead to better cultural communication?

SAMUEL HUNTINGTON and Bernard Lewis, two of the most respected Western scholars writing about the interaction between the West and the rest of the world, including the predominantly Arab/Islamic Middle East, have each published important new and balanced articles in the Foreign Affairs magazine. It is fascinating, and very important, that the focus of this public debate among scholars and other thoughtful men and women has shifted slightly but meaningfully: from its former emphasis on democracy and free markets as the core Western values that entice the rest of the world, to a wider set of values and traditions that may explain Western "modernity" and the West's global dominance today versus the relatively underdeveloped, often chaotic, nature of Middle Eastern societies.

Huntington and Lewis are intellectual giants who have single-handedly spurred an exciting global discussion of these issues: yet, being themselves the products of Western societies, they also reflect those societies' core modern values, including the post-industrial Information Age's embrace of titillating entertainment as a pillar of Western social, economic and political norms (as we witnessed, for example, in their respective approaches to questions about the "clash of civilisations" or the general lack of democratic Muslim states). In these latest essays, Huntington and Lewis drop this penchant to perform and focus, instead, on the issue of modernity, raising two broad questions: Why is the West modern and the Mideast not? And is the rest of the world destined to become Western if and as it becomes modern?

Both writers list attributes that they see as the core values and practices of Western modernity, including Catholicism and Protestantism, European languages, separation of church and state, the Classical legacy, science and technology, the rule of law, social pluralism, representative or democratic government, individualism, civil society (voluntary associational life) and the granting of civil and political rights to women. What I find so interesting about this list is that all these attributes (except the first three which are distinctly European in origin) are deeply engrained in Arab/Islamic history and traditions, though often manifested in a very different form.

For example, I would argue that traditional Middle Eastern governance at the local and regional level — which is where most decisions were made traditionally — is participatory, pluralistic and accountable, and therefore

morally and functionally equivalent to the Western systems of electoral democracies.

Bernard Lewis puts this in another way in some of his other writings and recent talks, noting that "the Islamic concept of sovereignty is both contractual and consensual," with a sort of constitutional law present within the Shari'a (Islamic law). Lewis states with his usual acumen: "The modern process of change was undoubtedly initiated by the West, but is it Western in its origins? The West was not born like Aphrodite from the seafoam, and much of it is of non-Western origin, distinct from the Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian roots of Western civilisation."

He goes on to note that modern Western civilisation "is the first to embrace the whole planet... (and) today the dominant civilisation is Western, and Western standards, therefore, define modernity."

Huntington for his part states that the central characteristics that define the West and distinguish it from other civilisations "antedate the modernisation of the West". He sees these values of Western civilisation, listed above, as emerging in the 8th and 9th centuries, while Western modernisation started in the 17th and 18th centuries. He concludes that Western and modern civilisations are not necessarily always to be identified with one another.

The relevance of this debate for the Middle East and other parts of the developing South is substantial, given the tremendous potential impact of Western values and systems on traditional societies due to the universal, high-tech reach of Western economies. It is possible, it seems, that some Southern states may find their economies and capital cities tightly plugged into a global economy defined by Western multinational corporations, while the rest of our societies remain anchored in their pre-modern ways. Within our capital cities, we already find pockets of "modernity" characterised by the superficial symbols of Western life (clothing, food, television, music, etc.), but I would argue that the penetration of Western values into our societies, even our capitals, is extremely thin.

Rather, what may be going on in our societies is the parallel advancement of modern, Western lifestyles and values alongside their traditional, Oriental counterparts. The gradual political liberalisation within many Middle Eastern states in recent years has released public and personal energies that had been bottled up for hundreds of years. Thus, we witness an explosion of Western-style, largely incoherent Arab political parties and a parallel

explosion of community-based, non-governmental organisations that are far more credible because they are usually linked to the indigenous, proven forms of power in our societies (tribal, ethnic, religious and monarchical/patriarchal power).

Many Western observers miss the complexity and depth of the Arab civil society because they are looking for forms that mirror Western institutions, and also because they are often intellectually and culturally confused by the dimensions and validity of political forces in societies that largely reject secularism and embrace religion as an integral part of life.

A man who straddles east and west is the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who said in a recent speech to Western business leaders in Istanbul: "Since the Enlightenment, the spiritual bedrock of Western civilisation has been eroded and undermined. Intelligent, well-intentioned people sincerely believed that the wonders of science could replace the miracles of faith. But these great minds missed one vital truth — that faith is not a garment to be slipped on and off: it is a quality of the human spirit, from which it is inseparable. The modern era has not eliminated faith — you could no more eliminate faith than love. The modern era has simply replaced spiritual faith in God with secular faith in man."

I mention these points for two reasons: to express appreciation to scholars like Huntington and Lewis for moving beyond a simplistic emphasis on the centrality of democracy as a defining value of coherent statehood; and to challenge them and other Western and Oriental scholars to come up with a new, more balanced and less ethnocentric approach to analysing and comparing civilisations through a more sophisticated and global scale of attributes.

If "modernity" is simply to become the new prod with which the West would poke Middle Eastern and other Southern cultures into belittlement and neo-colonialism, then this will prove to be a divisive, diversionary and ultimately harmful discussion. If, on the other hand, we can discuss "modernity" in its full cultural and historical context — as Bernard Lewis hints at with his view that the Islamic World defined the transition from antiquity to modernity — then perhaps we can promote a truly useful and satisfying inter-civilisational discussion that can help us to appreciate the strengths of our common legacy rather than the strains of our few differences.

'Human liberties are part of Asians' values, too'

By A. M. Rosenthal

HONG KONG — For more than 50 years, in country after country, Asians have shown passion for political liberty and, if it comes to that, readiness to fight for it. Today's dictators, like yesterday's colonialists, proclaim that political rights are not an Asian value. But they live in perpetual fear because they know that they are.

The reality that Asians by the millions have struggled to get or keep freedom is ignored in the West. Japan and India hold onto the democracy into which they emerged after World War II. The Philippines, which lost it, seized it back in an election. South Korea and Taiwan create it for themselves: other Asian nations

move closer. But the lie lives on — Asians do not really want it and cannot handle it.

In Hong Kong, betrayal is added to falsehood. People who have benefited most by freedom — businessmen, politicians and bureaucrats from the city and abroad — act as though the future belongs to the world's dangerous but dwindling gang of tyrannies. They tell the people of this magnificent explosion of a city that they will be just as free after China's takeover on July 1 — and if by chance not, learn to kiss your chains.

"Keeping faith in Hong Kong" is a brochure by top foreign and Hong Kong Chinese businessmen. A few pages glow with all the promises made by China to

preserve Hong Kong's freedoms — most of them already scrapped.

Then, page by page, top executives announce that Hong Kong will be richer and better off in Beijing's approaching world.

Martin Lee shows me another document. He makes his living as a barrister and his place in history as the head of the Democratic Party, which Beijing is squeezing out of public life.

Mr. Lee keeps faith in Hong Kong his way. He travels the world searching for leaders who will lend a word of support for liberties which the Chinese have already let Hong Kong know will be drastically redesigned and reduced when they take power — freedom of the press, free-

dom to organise politically, that sort. He is not getting very far.

The document is a law signed by President George Bush in 1992. Like Mr. Lee, it recognises Hong Kong as a part of China. But it says that democratisation and human rights in Hong Kong are "directly relevant" to American interests and policy and will remain so after June 30, 1997. Mr. Lee suggests that the present U.S. policy of ignoring the future of human rights in Hong Kong breaks America's own law.

Well, just what do you want the United States to do? I ask, a little blustery with embarrassment. He has a modest wish list. Maybe President Bill Clinton might disinvite the president of China to the

United States? Or himself and Vice-President Al Gore from their planned pilgrimages to Beijing?

Fat chance, I say, but to myself. After all, I am an American and have the human right to be ashamed of my country's shell game, the suckering of Hong Kong and mainland Chinese who have put their own faith in America on the table.

Tung Chee-Hwa is the businessman appointed by Beijing to be Hong Kong's chief executive after midnight June 30. He has some

things in common with Mr. Lee — warmth and good manners. He says to trust him, the new Hong Kong will not violate political rights. Perhaps I could trust him. He is so pleasant — but the gulag keepers he is serving?

No. I will stick with Martin Lee and the other millions of Asians who know that political and human liberties are part of their values and want them so much that dictatorships tremble.

The New York Times

LETTERS

Criminal devices

To the Editor:

WHEN AN earth-moving machine carves up a mountainside illegally, then it is committing a crime.

True, it does not issue an instant blast equivalent to the noise of an explosive device, but the damage a bulldozer does is equally harmful and more long-lasting than a bomb.

When the armed bulldozer is protected by one of the most heavily armed pack of soldiers in the world, then it becomes a criminal device.

A bulldozer becomes more harmful when its operator is immunised by a set of biased laws and government decrees that see nothing wrong with confiscating other people's land.

When this bulldozer carries out its destructive activities under the nose of an Israeli officer who kneels, raises his M-16, takes careful, unhurried aim and cold-bloodedly murders a Palestinian child with an internationally prohibited rubber-coated bullet only because the child expresses his dismay at the pillaging of his birthplace, then it becomes a tool of terrorism.

It is truly deplorable, painful and outrageous to sit down every evening and watch Israelis and Americans lambasting Arafat and his colleagues for not gazing up the entire Palestinian nation while Israel builds streets, military posts and settlements on Arab land with total impunity.

How much hope is there in a system that exonerates two extremists who murdered unarmed civilians in broad daylight and walked away, only to have an official — by Israeli standards — court of justice claim that both killers acted in self-defence?

When a lone incident occurred in Jordan, King Hussein aborted a formal visit abroad and went to visit the bereaved families in an open expression of agony and compassion.

I will not dwell on what the Israelis did after their army systematically and intentionally shelled and massacred one hundred and twelve Lebanese civilians in Cana.

Any tool, if backed by enough malice, indiscriminate hatred and all the ultra modern means of destruction, and put to evil work under the steady approving gaze of the American Eagle, becomes more destructive than any explosive device detonated by a desperate uprooted Palestinian who, unlike us, stopped believing the U.S. is impartial, honest or even a broker of peace.

Mohammad Azoka,
Amman.

Immigration at issue: A globalisation debate

By Jim Hoagland

PARIS — The French have fused race and immigration into an existential issue that now dominates their politics. The issue turns on their twin intellectual obsessions, history and culture. But the boiling-hot debate over controlling immigration also has big implications for the faddish '90s topic of economic globalisation.

In parliament, the media and the streets of Paris, the French are arguing about methods for cutting down on illegal immigration by Africans, Arabs and Asians. Many French believe — in the face of evidence to the contrary — that clandestine immigration is the prime factor in their country's record unemployment and in spreading crime.

In this they do not differ greatly from many Americans, especially those in border states who bear an unfair share of the burdens they associate with Hispanic and Caribbean immigration, or those Germans who would like to see Turkish workers and families who have lived 20 or more years in Germany return "home" permanently.

But this is one more thing the French do their own way. They debate immigration more openly and honestly than do other industrial democracies. They agonise or exult over anti-immigrant worker measures that do not differ significantly from those already adopted, with little sustained fanfare, in the United States and Germany.

The penchant for defining themselves in political and ideological battle explains in part why relations with foreign "visitors" have become an issue of national identity as France sorts out its place in Europe and the world.

In one sense, the chickens of the past are coming home to roost. The new immigration measures affect the peoples to whom the French once exported their culture and politics, as well as their goods, missionaries and army units to maintain order in the colonies.

But suddenly Africans, Arabs and Asians of modest means who thought they had been granted access to a world culture find that they are greeted with suspicion or even hostility if they seek to work in or visit France. The xenophobic National Front political party of Jean-Marie Le Pen promises to expel the estimated 3 million legal and illegal immigrants who have established homes in France, and open up 3 million jobs for French citizens.

aliens.

Polls show that the legislation is broadly popular. Most of the controversy and protests have centred on one incredibly insensitive clause that would have required French hosts of foreign visitors to file reports with the police when the foreigners left the hosts' homes. That carried unacceptable echoes of France's collaborationist past in World War II, when Jews were reported to Nazi authorities for deportation to death camps. The government quickly modified the clause to eliminate the informer requirement.

France's conscience is uneasy, about the Vichy era and about what it proposes to do to its former colonial wards, who made significant contribution to building the modern French economy. But the French dilemma is in fact only an exposed cutting edge of a problem faced by other industrial democracies that have become magnets for immigrant workers and families in this era of global communications, easy travel and easy trade and capital movement.

Money, goods, technology and ideas move across increasingly permeable national frontiers with ease. This is the core of "globalisation," which in many ways recreates the mercantile conditions of colonial empires, minus the missionaries and troops.

But people who move across borders for work — especially those from culturally and racially distinct communities — have become a source of political controversy in country after country, even though they have been stimulated by the global media and entertainment industry, and by the practices of world business, to seek better standards of living wherever they can find them.

As they tighten immigration controls, the French are also channelling the development funds they spend in Africa into areas from which immigrant flows are heaviest. We want you to continue to partake of our products and our culture, the French action suggests, but to do so check your voice.

That may sound terribly cynical, if not vaguely racist. But the French dilemma should offer food for thought for the law-, policy- and opinion-makers of America, now the world's greatest cultural and economic magnet, major harvester of the fruits of globalisation and source of the most powerful dreams of a more glamorous life.

In recent years the actions and words of America's leaders have undermined the United Nations and other international bodies. They have not supported expanding the work of the World Bank and other development organisations.

The French are wrestling, however imperfectly, with the responsibilities that their actions and attitudes towards other peoples create. Can Americans make the same claim?

The Washington Post

UNESCO head says peace should be on human rights list

'Lasting peace is a prerequisite for the exercise of all human rights and duties'

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Peace should be included in the list of human rights upheld by international law and the United Nations, Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Federico Mayor has recently proposed.

"Lasting peace is a prerequisite for the exercise of all human rights and duties. It is not the peace of silence, of men and women who by choice or constraint remain silent. It is the peace of freedom - and therefore of just laws - of happiness, equality and solidarity, in which all citizens count, live together and share," wrote Mr. Mayor in his declaration for the year 1997, entitled "The Human Right To Peace."

International law, not meaning a host of rigid regulations or principles, evolves to meet the changing needs of societies and to conform with the different paths of human development and, as such, other rights have been added to those listed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"To them it should be added the right which underlines them all: the right to peace," Mr. Mayor recommended.

The U.N. General Assembly Resolution 217 of December 1948, better known as the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," stipulates in its article 1 that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

The rights upheld by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are: right to life, liberty and the security of the person; right to recognition, everywhere, as a person before the law; right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty; right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state; right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution; right to a nationality; right to marry and to found a family; property rights; freedom of opinion and expression; freedom of association; right to work; right to rest and leisure.

The 1950 European Convention on Human Rights has gone even further, prohibiting torture and inhu-

man or degrading treatment or punishment, death penalty, expulsion or denial of entry of a state's own nationals, collective expulsion of aliens.

Peace, development and democracy form an interactive triangle and are mutually reinforcing: "Without peace there can be no development, and without democracy there can be no sustainable development, as disparities soon become unsustainable and lead to imposition and domination," Mr. Mayor wrote.

The vicious circle that leads from misunderstanding to confrontation and that too often culminates in the use of force can be broken only through "a daily effort to know others better and respect them," said a UNESCO declaration proclaiming 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and UNESCO, the "Year for Tolerance."

"It is only through a daily effort to know others better and respect them that we would be able to tackle, at source, the problems of marginalisation, indifference, resentment and hatred," Mr. Mayor wrote on that occasion.

In his 1997 declaration, he stressed the need for conflict-prevention measures and mechanisms at the international, national and individual levels. "We must identify the roots of global problems and strive, with imagination and determination, to check conflicts in their early stages. Even better, prevent them. Prevention is the victory that gives the measure of our distinctively human faculties. We must know in order to foresee, and foresee in order to prevent. We must act in a timely, decisive and courageous manner, knowing that prevention engages the attention only when it fails."

Journalists and media circles are specifically addressed as vehicles for the spread of a new "culture of peace" in Mr. Mayor's 1997 declaration. "Peace, health and normality do not make the news. Media should try to give greater prominence to these intangibles, to these unheralded triumphs," he urged.

But civilian, military, religious bodies of society also must commit themselves in a "universal renunciation of violence," and mobilise to permit "the transition within two or three years from a culture of war, to a culture of

peace."

"A new approach to security is required at world, regional and national levels. The armed forces must be the guarantors of democratic stability and the protection of all citizens, because we cannot move from systems of complete security and no freedom to systems of complete freedom and no security. Ministries of war and defence must gradually be turned into ministries of peace."

Many countries are prepared for improbable wars involving the large-scale deployment of inordinately costly equipment, but most often they are not equipped to detect and mitigate natural or man-made disasters that occur repeatedly in many areas of the globe.

Mr. Mayor stressed that "investing in emergency help, relief measures and in prevention, tackling issues like continent-wide water distribution and storage networks, means being prepared for peace, prepared to live in peace."

"Currently, we are prepared for possible war but find ourselves surprised and defenceless in our daily lives in the face of mishaps of all kinds."

But governments and media are not the only target of Mr. Mayor's criticism. "The United Nations must likewise equip itself with the necessary response capacity to prevent the recurrence of atrocities and instances of genocide, such as those which today afflict our collective conscience — Cambodia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, Somalia and Rwanda..." he added.

Peace, he said, is not only absence of armed conflicts, but also social justice. "It is not enough to feel outrage when we learn of the number of children exploited sexually or at work, of refugees or of those suffering from hunger. We must react, each of us to the best of our abilities. It is not just a matter of looking at what the government is doing. We must part with something of our own."

According to the State of the World's Refugees 1995 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are 27.6 million registered refugees, displaced and internally displaced persons all over the world.

If a "culture of peace" is to prevail, education is the strongest drive to the predisposing factors of peace and development, said Mr. Mayor.

"Guaranteeing lifelong education for all would enable us to control population growth, improve the quality of life, increase civic participation, reduce migratory flows, level out differences in income and prevent the destruction of the environment."

"None of this can be achieved in a context of war," Mr. Mayor continued, and declared that "What is needed is to reduce the investment in arms of destruction in order to increase investment in the construction of peace."

Far from being an arid accumulation of information, education must be imparted because "nothing can replace the friendly words of a teacher, or the caresses and smiles of parents," Mr. Mayor said.

Learning without frontiers - whether geographi-

cal, or frontiers of age or language - can help change the world, by reducing or even eliminating the many barriers that today impede universal access to knowledge and education, he added.

Knowledge and understanding of the other, integration and globalisation should strengthen integration, tolerance and peoples' own identity and cultural, religious and historical heritage, and not lead to plain uniformity.

Globalisation carries with it the danger of uniformity and increases the temptation to turn inwards and take refuge in all kinds of convictions - religious, ideological, cultural or nationalistic, Mr. Mayor warned.

The June 1996 Amman Declaration, issued by UNESCO Mid-Decade Meeting of the

International Consultative Forum on Education for All, stated that the threat of uniformity must be overcome through "emphasising the forms of learning and critical thinking that enable individuals to understand changing environments, create new knowledge and shape their own destinies."

The conference also defined "Education for all, by all, throughout life" as "the greatest challenge of the 21st century."

"I appeal to all families, educators, religious figures, parliamentarians, politicians, artists, intellectuals, scientists, craft workers and journalists... to spread a message of tolerance, non-violence, peace and justice," Mr. Mayor said concluding his declaration.

Randa Habib's corner

Mirrored truth

— Mirror, mirror on the wall.
— What?
— Who is the greatest of all?
— You mean you woke me up just to ask me this boring, millennium-old question?
— Please mirror, I need to know.
— Let's see. Are you important?
— I suppose I am important to my family and my friends.
— Who cares about that. I mean are you an important person in the eyes of the society?
— Well, I care. I differentiate between right and wrong, and I try to advocate truth.
— But are you, for example, a member of government?
— No.
— I see, you are one of those rare Jordanians who have not held yet a ministerial post.
— Are you related in any way to a senior government official?
— No.
— Do you know anyone who is related to a member of the cabinet?
— No.
— Are you a rich, powerful business person?
— No.
— Do you think that you are irreplaceable in your job, and that it would be even unfair to compare anyone to you?
— No.
— Are you photogenic?
— No.
— Does your photo appear often in the press or on TV?
— No.
— Then stop wasting my time, you are simply nobody.



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Australia looks at population amid race row

MELBOURNE (R) — The Australian government, facing the worst immigration backlash in a decade, has prepared a draft population report as it seeks to refute the notion that this mainly white Christian nation is being "swamped" by Asians.

Yet to be released, the report shows that calls for a halt to Australia's 40-per cent annual Asian immigration intake are based on falsehoods, said Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock.

"There is the argument that we are being swamped by Asians, when in fact our Asian population at the moment is 4.8 per cent (of Australia's 18 million people). In the next 30 years, it's unlikely to be any greater than 7.5 per cent," he said.

In a recent interview, Mr. Ruddock declined to discuss the findings of the report, which is being circulated among government members for comment before being presented to parliament.

But there are hopes it will help take the heat out of the immigration debate, reignited last year by independent politician Pauline Hanson, a fish-and-chip shop owner whose September call for a freeze on immigration struck a chord with

voters.

Ms. Hanson has warned that Asian migrants, who now account for over a third of Australia's annual immigration intake, are swamping the nation — a belief also evident in opinion polls.

Her speeches have brought thousands of people onto the streets in protest, been blamed for a surge in racist attacks on new migrants and engulfed the government in a damaging race row which has reverberated among its Asian trading partners.

To former Science Minister Barry Jones, who pushed for the government to prepare the report, Australia's increasingly divisive immigration debate needs to be steered towards a more sober argument about Australia's size and ethnic make-up.

"Once you say this year's immigration intake is 40 per cent Asian, someone like Pauline Hanson says, 'God, they are taking over'," said Jones, who chaired an official population inquiry in 1994.

"You might get a very high Asian intake in a particular year... But the important thing to look at is the population in five and 10 years' time," he told Reuters.

Mr. Jones' committee of inquiry did not address racial issues directly, but he said the committee anticipated the current race debate in 1994, when it recommended Canberra consider setting immigration levels with a long-term population target in mind.

"We saw the prospect that there was a grave danger that there could be here, as in Europe, a very divisive debate about immigration," Mr. Jones said.

The inquiry arrived at possible "population goals" for the middle of the next century, including a rapid escalation up to 50 million, setting a mid-range of 23 million to 30 million, or stabilising the population at 17 million to 23 million.

It suggested Canberra adopt a population goal, taking the nation's resources and fragile environment into account, and then tailor its immigration intake accordingly, instead of adjusting annual immigration levels ad hoc and inviting criticism.

"When you talk about immigration, that's 'them'. When you talk about population, that's 'us'," Mr. Jones said, adding he felt a population policy would avoid more race rows over immigration.

IMF sees Egypt moving on right path of economic reforms and making progress

CAIRO (AFP) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved without discussion a quarterly review by its executive board of Egypt's economic reform programme, signalling satisfaction with Cairo's performance, the IMF representative in Egypt has said.

"Normally the report is discussed by the executive directors and then it is usually approved but this time they chose not to discuss it because there was no major issue," Arvin Subramanian said.

"This reflects that Egypt is moving on the right path of its economic reforms programme and making progress," he said.

The Egyptian government daily Al-Ahram, in a dispatch from Washington, said the approval was a

"precedent in the history of relations between Egypt and the IMF and underlines confidence in the reforms taken by the government."

Egyptian Economy Minister Nawal Tatawi said in a report to parliament's economic commission that Egypt's external debt stood at \$31.8 billion, most of which was rescheduled until the year 2026.

"The debt service, installments and interests have dramatically decreased since the start of the 1990s," Ms. Tatawi said in her report.

"The total of this service also decreased to reach \$1.9 billion following the agreement struck with the IMF and the scrapping of half of Egypt's debt," she added.

Egypt and the IMF reached an agreement at the end of 1996 which paved

the way for the annulment of the last installment of half of Egypt's debt to the Paris Club.

Mr. Subramanian meanwhile noted that the inflation rate had dropped to 5.4 per cent at the end of February while the budget deficit decreased to only 0.8 per cent of the gross domestic product.

At the same time the money supply did not exceed 11 per cent despite a heavy flow of foreign capital, he said.

Mr. Subramanian also expected foreign reserves at the Egyptian central bank to reach \$19.5 billion by the end of 1997 from \$19.2 billion in mid-March.

The level of investments also rose to 18 per cent, one per cent higher than last year, he added.

Qatar boosts spending, expects higher income

DOHA (AFP) — The Gulf state of Qatar has announced a sharp increase in expenditure for the fiscal year 1997-1998 on the back of higher projected earnings from oil and gas exports.

Spending was forecast at 16.38 billion Qatari riyals (\$4.5 billion), an increase of 19.2 per cent over the previous year's expenditure of 13.74 billion riyals (\$3.77 billion).

Revenues were put at 13.39 billion riyals (\$3.67 billion), far higher than the 1996-1997 earnings of 10.79 billion riyals (\$2.96 billion).

The figures, carried by the official Qatari News Agency, showed the 1997-1998 deficit was estimated at around \$821 million, slightly higher than the previous year's shortfall of \$810 million.

Qatari Finance and Economy Minister Khalifa bin Mohammad Al Thani said spending was projected higher because of pay rises for civil servants and an increase in allocations for projects.

He said allocations for new development ventures and projects under construction during the current fiscal year, which started on April 1, stood at 2.66 billion riyals (\$724 million) compared with 2.22 billion riyals (\$609 million) during the previous year.

He said the Qatari government would give priority to wiping out the budget deficit by the year 2000, diversifying the oil-reliant economy, expanding the private sector and containing the debt, most of which has accumulated from borrowing for the country's giant gas liquefaction projects.

"The priorities also include the development of oil and gas revenues and other earnings, as well as securing the necessary financial resources for the large productive ventures," the minister said.

Bankers said Qatar forecast higher revenues because of expectations oil prices would remain relatively firm despite a recent slide caused by slackening seasonal demand.

Survey shows slowdown in Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — The Bank of Israel's quarterly survey of 609 companies showed that a slowdown in economic activity that began in the fourth quarter of 1996 continued in the first quarter of 1997.

The central bank's survey showed the main reason was a decline in domestic demand, involving both a drop in private consumption and investment. Exports remained stable at a high level.

"What we see is that the worsening in the economy that began in the last quarter of 1996 was not a one-

time episode but is continuing into the first quarter of 1997. All in all the situation is not good," said Rafi Melnick, deputy director of the Bank of Israel's research department.

The industrial sector reported a drop in output and sales for the second quarter in a row and stability in exports for the fourth consecutive quarter. Lower domestic demand was concentrated in sectors linked to construction and textiles. The construction sector reported a decline in building starts.

Industrial companies also

reported a drop in raw material inventories and the number of workers.

The retail sector reported only a slight decline in activity.

A large percentage of companies in the hotels sector reported a decline in activity for the third consecutive quarter. The hotels attributed the decline to the deteriorating security situation, which has led to a fall in reservations from abroad. The sector expects the decline to continue in the coming quarter.

Oil price hike helps cut Kuwait deficit

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwait's state deficit for the last financial year was 40 per cent lower than forecast due to higher oil prices rather than government spending restraint, official figures have showed.

The actual deficit was one billion dinars (\$3.3 billion) in fiscal year 1995/1996, compared with a budgeted 1.7 billion dinars (\$5.6 billion), according to state Audit Bureau figures.

Oil revenues for the year that ended June 30, 1996 were 3.1 billion dinars (\$10.2 billion), some 25 per cent higher than the

forecast 2.5 billion dinars (\$8.2 billion), the Audit Bureau said.

Oil earnings from production of two million barrels of oil per day accounted for about 90 per cent of all government's revenues, which reached 3.5 billion dinars (\$11.5 billion) in 1995/1996.

Oil prices have increased steadily in the past 18 months, rising to more than \$5 above the budgeted \$13 per barrel.

Public spending was 4.3 billion dinars (\$14.1 billion), fractionally higher than originally forecast.

In addition, the government set aside 347 million

dinars (\$1.1 billion) in 1995/96 for the Reserve Fund for Future Generations, bringing total expenditures to about 4.6 billion dinars (\$15 billion).

The government by law must set aside 10 per cent of forecast revenues each year to the future generations fund, but it also finances the deficit from this fund and other overseas assets which are estimated to be worth a total of \$40 billion.

The budget deficit for the current financial year 1996/1997 is forecast at 1.5 billion dinars (\$4.9 billion).

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7363	0.6578	0.6578	106.62	1.9365	1.6363	163.63	20.480
DE Mark	0.5780	1.0000	0.4833	0.4833	193.62	3.3756	2.9363	293.63	36.363
GB Sterling	1.5520	2.0700	1.0000	1.0000	166.07	1.9365	1.6363	163.63	20.480
CH Franc	0.6578	0.6578	0.4833	1.0000	136.75	1.9365	1.6363	163.63	20.480
JP Yen	0.0094	0.0094	0.0068	0.0068	1.0000	1.9365	1.6363	163.63	20.480
CA Dollar	0.7153	1.2328	0.4833	0.4833	1.11	1.9365	1.6363	163.63	20.480
IT Lira	0.0006	0.0006	0.0004	0.0004	1.9365	1.0000	0.8756	87.56	11.020
NL Guilder	0.3760	0.3760	0.2833	0.2833	1.9365	1.6363	1.0000	100.00	12.500
FR Franc	0.1724	0.1724	0.1300	0.1300	1.9365	1.6363	0.8756	87.56	11.020

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7363	0.6578	0.6578	106.62	1.9365	1.6363	163.63	20.480
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	2.4572	0.9324	0.9324	151.12	2.4572	2.1572	215.72	27.072
GB Sterling	0.2666	0.4600	0.1000	0.1000	16.60	0.2666	0.2366	23.66	2.966
Bahrain Dinar	2.66	4.60	1.00	1.00	166.07	2.66	2.36	23.6	2.96
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.4747	0.1033	0.1033	17.17	0.2747	0.2447	24.47	3.047
Kuwait Dinar	3.2889	5.7288	1.2328	1.2328	208.98	3.2889	2.9889	298.89	37.389
Emirates Dinar	0.2724	0.4724	0.1027	0.1027	16.96	0.2724	0.2424	24.24	3.023
Lebanese L1000	0.85	1.4697	0.5448	0.5448	92.68	0.85	0.75	75	9.5
Egyptian	0.2850	0.4950	0.1112	0.1112	18.73	0.2850	0.2550	25.50	3.185

Energy		
Brent	17.85	17.70
W. Tena	19.30	19.45
Kony	17.85	17.70
Dubai	16.25	16.25
UL Gas	189.00	189.00

Mid-East Currencies					
SA Riyal	0.2688	0.4590	0.16431	0.39159	33.72233
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.46984	0.16786	0.40005	34.507
KW Dinar	0.2389	5.67215	0.02675	4.83092	415.973
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.57457	1.93479	3.896	335.458
CY Pound	1.9473	3.3569	1.1963	2.856	246.19

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	ITL	FRF	ESP	PTA
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4600	0.1000	0.1000	16.60	0.2666	0.2366	23.66	2.966
AE Dirham	0.2724	0.4724	0.1027	0.1027	16.96	0.2724	0.2424	24.24	3.023
KW Dinar	3.2889	5.7288	1.2328	1.2328	208.98	3.2889	2.9889	298.89	37.389
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.6578	0.2833	0.2833	47.47	0.3770	0.3470	34.70	4.370
CY Pound	1.9473	3.3568	1.1963	1.1963	200.48	1.9473	1.7473	174.73	22.048

Main Equity Indices										
Country	Index	Value	% Chg	Value	% Chg	Value	% Chg	Value	% Chg	Value
New York	DOW JONES	6366.52	-22.07	-0.35	6369.32	6356.78	6391.68			
New York	S&P 500	735.03	-2.82	-0.38	736.59	733.89	737.65			
London	FT-SE 100	4257.1	-19	-0.44	4255.8	4232.9	4276.7			
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	17892.47	-184.31	-0.87	17826.9	17847.4	17847.4			
Paris	CAC 40	2586.13	-8.43	-0.33	2573.91	2528.3	2574.96			
Frankfurt	DAX	3279.9	-60.16	-1.8	3288.82	3266.96	3340.05			

Energy		
Commodity	Price	Unit
Coffee (c/lbs)	192.17	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1435	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	312	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	0	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	22.59	FR
Tea (kg/kg)	142	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot

* JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Price	Unit
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.5817	1.1575
DE Mark	0.4114	0.4135
CH Franc	0.4848	0.487
FR Franc	0.1224	0.123
JP Yen	0.56	0.5628
NL Guilder	0.365	0.3675
IT Lira	0.4175	0.4196

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Meridien lead-in
- Wharves
- Promo
- Planted
- Shady place
- Olympian queen
- Kubrick film (with "A")
- LBJ pet
- time
- (Immediately)
- Bay window
- Runs in place
- Supports a motion
- Explosive
- Horse racing emblem
- Musical work
- Bird of prey: Fr.
- Drive's starting point
- Film of Hellman
- play
- Haggard heroine
- Specialized vocabulary
- Cupid
- Beer holder
- Ineffectually
- Amusement
- Warsaw natives
- American painter
- Fuel
- Decade number
- Beauty queen's attribute?
- Bancroft or Boleyn
- Mystical poet
- Diaskeasts do
- Unites
- Kind of butterfly
- Watches

by James E. Hinrich, Jr.

9 Good sign to an angel

10 Lighthouse

11 Noted Bolshevik

12 Prodded

13 Erse speakers

14 Tartan skirt

15 Kind of chair

16 Kind of jockey

17 Spectacle

18 Fashion magazine

19 Hauls

20 Colorful tropical fish

21 Squelch

22 Actress

23 Dickinson

24 Efficiency analysis

25 Organic compound

26 Uncanny

27 Loathing

28 Utah town

29 Harness item

30 Blank looks

31 Kind of shoe

32 High: prof.

33 Shucks!

34 Unaccompanied

35 Nooka or Puget

36 Troublesome

37 Certain exam

38 Border lake

39 Takes home

40 Scale info

41 carte

42 No kidding!

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You should not become upset today if you have to postpone labouring on a new project, however get busy and keep those promises you have made and thereby you will retain your good reputation which is important to you.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Refrain from lending money today to a mere acquaintance, or you will surely lose it. Try to be more understanding to a fellow associate and he or she will be grateful for your generosity with assistance on a project.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You will get the assistance you need today if you try to cooperate more with a fellow associate. Be sure to obey all rules and regulations which are imposed upon you by those in authority and thereby you will see positive results.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Take some time for a little relaxation today, and later get down to business with much energy and enthusiasm. Later this evening will be good for seeing close friends and participating in recreational activities which are fun.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You may feel torn between idealistic and material ideas today, so try to strike a balance between the two. Invite guests into your home later this evening and show them a good time by being the perfect host.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If someone "stands up" today, use the time to visit some friends you haven't seen for a long time and renew old acquaintances. Be extra careful while driving on the highway thereby avoid any difficulties.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Don't leave any important practical matters unattended today to pursue a new interest which is not worthwhile. Keep your nose to the grindstone and make every effort to complete any tasks which you have put aside.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Much good can come of a get together today with friends who have the same interests as you. Don't spend too much money later this evening or you could come up short when it really counts in the days ahead.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Try to use logic today to settle a disagreement between a family member and a stranger. Be more understanding of your mate later this evening by doing something special for him or her which will be much appreciated.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't let a letter you receive today keep you from sticking to your schedule of career activities. Maintain a positive attitude despite any difficulties which arise and need your utmost attention to get them resolved.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You should not allow an easy-going friend to waste your time today and keep you from important career activities. Be sure to complete any orders from superiors which you are given and need immediate attention.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This evening would be a fine time to invite some good friends into your abode and treat them as the perfect host. Get everything in order first, and have a fine time together which everyone will be quite appreciative.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Government hikes cement prices

****THE MINISTER** of industry, trade and supply has approved new prices for cement starting Monday. According to the minister's decision, a tonne of cement in 50-kilogramme bags now costs JD 48,000 delivered in trucks at the sites of the factories in Fuhais and Rashidiyah. Delivery by trucks to Amman, Salt, Madaba, Zarqa, Mafrq, Ramtha, Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, Karak, Tafileh, Maan, Aqaba, northern and southern Shuna and Ghor Al Safi brings the cost up to JD 48,700 per tonne. The previous price was JD 44,000 or \$63 per tonne. As such a 50-kilogramme bag of cement from any source should be sold to consumers for JD 2.435.

The price that should be paid by a trader, in possession of a valid profession licence, for a tonne of cement at the factories was specified at JD 47,250, but if the cement is delivered to the cities mentioned above with transportation costs borne by the company, traders have to pay JD 47,925 per tonne.

Bulk cement prices delivered on the mixers of the buyers at the sites of the two factories were fixed at JD 45,250 a tonne. Salt resistant bulk cement delivered at the factories was priced at JD 49,250. The bagged salt resistant cement became the most expensive Monday at JD 52,000 per tonne delivered at the factories. The new prices do not cover any quantities of cement that have been sold or paid for before the decision became effective Monday.

The last time cement prices were amended was in 1992. Since then production costs have gone up especially the prices of fuel, spare part, paper bags and other industrial costs. Despite the increase, Jordanian cement remains less expensive than in neighbouring countries where cement sells for about \$77 per tonne in Syria and \$90 per tonne in Israel and the Palestinian territories (Al Ra'i).

Money changers allowed to open foreign currency accounts abroad

****THE CENTRAL** Bank has allowed local money changers to open foreign currency accounts outside Jordan and has agreed to cancel the requirement of having the money changers publish their annual financial statements in daily newspapers. This decision will greatly help the money changers collect the value of the cheques they purchase as, under the present system, the collection is through local banks and take as long as 14 days to 20 days, said Mut'at Al Kabarti, head of the society of money changers. Under the new decision, money changers can have their transactions shortened to four days and customers can benefit from lower commissions.

Money changers are estimated to have a gross turnover of JD 500 million in buying and selling currencies each year. Eighty per cent of the amount involves the U.S. dollar. The money changers were banned to open foreign currency accounts in 1989 when their businesses were closed for fear of currency speculation during the financial crisis that swept Jordan at that time (Al Dstour).



Minister Saket (left) inspects the new premises of the company (Petra photo)

Jordanian-Syrian company generates JD6.17m profit

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian-Syrian Land Transport Company (JSLTC) made a total pre-tax profit of JD 6,167,234 last year from its transport operations between Syria and Jordan on the one hand and between the two countries and other states on the other.

The announcement was made by JSLTC Board Chairman Hamdi Habashneh during a visit to the company's newly-built headquarters by Transport Minister Bassam Al Saket who was briefed on the company's activities and future plans.

According to Mr. Habashneh, the company, which operates 412 trucks including newly acquired 50 lorries, has fared very well during the past four years. He pointed out that the company's capital grew by JD 3 million between 1994 and 1996.

The increase in the revenues was reflected in the improvement of the workers' wages and enabled the company in 1995 to embark on manufacturing the body of semi-trailers and carry

out other technical work on vehicles at its own workshops, Mr. Habashneh said.

Noting that the total quantities of various goods, mainly cement and cereals, transported by the company's trucks amounted to 1,086,752 tonnes, Mr. Habashneh indicated that the company has now established a parking zone for the vehicles in Aqaba and an office at the Jordanian-Syrian border.

He said plans are underway for establishing a service for transporting passengers travelling on buses between the two countries.

Dr. Saket toured the workshops and stressed that the transport sector is a very important element in the national economy. He also voiced Jordan's pride in the company's performance which, he said, contributes to Arab economic integration.

He said that the region will be entering a new phase of commercial activity and openness to the world economy which require further efforts to promote transport services.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHORTLIST											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 14/04/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRADING	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
269,000 213,000	ARAB BANK	11.8	1.56	2	120	30665	256.00	255.75	-25-		
2,100 1,790	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	15	8170	14704	1.80	1.80	-		
5,500 4,250	CALDER ARAB BANK	6.5	3.66	1	200	620	4.30	4.10	-20-		
1,210 880	MID-EAST INV. BK.	65.7	0.00	8	2650	2720	99	1.00	-01-		
2,610 2,120	INDUSTRIAL INV. BK.	5.3	6.05	1	1000	2300	2.30	2.30	-		
5,100 4,280	THE HOUSING BK.	19.1	2.82	12	6911	33907	4.86	4.86	-04-		
1,090 800	JOR. GULF BANK	4.8	8.64	2	1050	1539	81	81	-		
4,220 3,480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	18.1	0.00	6	1050	3953	3.76	3.76	-		
3,800 3,000	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	17.3	0.00	3	316	993	3.10	3.15	-05-		
2,850 1,040	REIT AL-MAL (SEITRA)	7	13.16	1	250	285	1.08	1.14	-06-		
1,440 1,000	PRIMEVAL INV. BK.	9	0.00	5	6250	7128	1.10	1.15	-05-		
BANK SECTOR TOTALS						INDEX: 193.82	ICBGI: +0.07	56	29086	98212	
1,740 1,390	ARABIAN SEC. INSUR.	9.9	3.86	2	350	472	1.42	1.35	-07-		
6,170 3,700	AL-KHAYR AL-AMARI	14.5	3.51	2	213	1214	6.00	5.70	-30-		
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS						INDEX: 117.00	ICBGI: +0.99	4	563	1687	
1,830 1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.7	7.14	25	16169	27085	1.67	1.68	-01+		
1,540 1,320	SHIPPING LINES	9.9	8.51	4	15650	36778	2.35	2.35	-		
1,940 1,590	WAC - PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	1	500	825	1.03	1.03	-		
1,050 820	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.5	6.67	1	100	90	89	90	-01+		
1,960 1,480	JORDANIAN INTL. TRAD.	25.2	0.00	7	4350	2184	4.48	4.49	-01+		
2,200 1,000	IND. EAST MOBILE	52.3	0.00	1	1000	1210	1.50	1.50	-		
1,220 960	SARNA EDUCATION	9	0.00	1	200	196	98	98	-		
2,220 1,680	UNITED CO.	7.9	6.59	17	7450	12465	1.69	1.67	-02-		
1,200 710	UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.00	1	200	213	71	71	-		
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS						INDEX: 104.23	ICBGI: +0.03	58	45719	80706	
3,730 3,060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.5	2.79	34	6824	24451	3.51	3.59	-08+		
3,500 2,710	JOR. PROSPERITY MINS	33.9	0.00	2	1500	4725	3.15	3.15	-		
6,100 4,950	ARAB POTASH CO.	18.1	3.24	5	1220	9074	5.95	5.98	-03+		
10,400 8,720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.3	7.88	11	1550	15716	10.15	10.15	-		
7,300 6,280	JORDAN TANNING	7.2	5.39	1	250	1670	6.37	6.48	-31+		
3,240 2,680	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	30.0	0.00	1	500	1115	10.15	10.15	-		
4,100 3,040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	20.0	5.48	19	8900	25199	2.24	2.23	-01-		
7,250 5,680	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	8.8	3.55	15	7624	53382	6.95	7.05	-10+		
6,050 4,250	JOR. ALUMINA CO. INV.	12.1	4.19	3	1300	6284	2.50	2.52	-02+		
1,960 1,450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	11.6	0.00	17	13700	6204	4.77	4.77	-		
1,400 1,040	ARAB PAPER COM. TRD.	11.2	6.28	2	1800	1980	1.08	1.10	-02+		
1,510 1,010	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	1	700	759	1.06	1.06	-		
1,020 840	NATIONAL IND.	8.9	10.00	27	16750	10076	78	78	-		
1,540 730	LIFESAVED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	45	23300	18577	7.70	7.77	-01-		
3,730 2,130	WAC. CABLE WIRE-NEPC	15.3	0.00	10	2500	6284	2.50	2.52	-02+		
1,170 570	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	24	22650	17098	7.70	7.75	-03-		
1,670 1,120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	26.2	0.00	6	2000	2800	1.41	1.40	-01-		
1,820 1,140	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	16.3	8.26	4	11150	13663	1.22	1.21	-01-		
1,270 840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	23.6	0.00	18	3910	3432	8.88	8.87	-01-		
2,400 1,750	EL-SAY READY WEAR	9	0.00	2	232	412	1.78	1.78	-		
1,360 1,080	WEL. TORONCO	27.5	0.00	9	5300	4296	1.37	1.37	-		
1,470 900	UNION CH. & YEG.	29.5	0.00	38	16550	15875	83	83	-		
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS						INDEX: 116.76	ICBGI: +0.63	314	148510	245860	
GRAND TOTAL						INDEX: 152.97	ICBGI: +0.28	432	223878	427465	
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 14/04/1997											
890 370	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	16.8	0.00	7	1600	2890	40	42	-02+		
790 640	JOR. TRADE PAC	12.3	0.00	3	3000	1380	46	46	-		
850 670	UNION INV. 501	66.0	0.00	11	10110	1870	68	69	-01+		
840 370	ARAB INV. INVEST.	9	0.00	13	13950	4325	46	46	-02+		
950 740	AL-SHARQ INV. 751	9	0.00	20	102870	58911	7.82	8.01	-01-		
950 620	AL-DAMRIYAH 752	14.5	0.00	5	3571	1418	64	64	-		
640 200	JOR. IND. INVEST. 753	9	0.00	1	1000	230	23	23	-		
140 150	ARAB FOOD & TRD.	9	0.00	20	37850	23826	40	40	-03+		
1,690 1,300	NATL. CLOTHING	8	0.00	1	150	213	1.44	1.42	-02-		
890 430	ARAB TRVL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	12	8900	4005	45	45	-		
120 890	NATL. TEXTILE	8	0.00	6	2000	1013	1.60	1.61	-03+		
850 400	NATL. MULT. TRD. NAKHO	8	0.00	68	184655	107802	56	59	-03+		
680 430	KAYAK DYES & MOULD	8	0.00	17	2000	1150	56	57	-01-		
980 720	JORDAN STEEL	8	0.00	17	24819	19118	7.67	7.67	-01+		
1,330 890	UNION TORONCO 752	8	0.00	3	1250	800	89	89	-		
770 550	RAIY PHARM. 651	26.5	0.00	27	53641	14999	62	63	-01+		
960 390	TRD. INV.	8	0.00	13	12500	5381	41	43	-02+		
820 590	NATL. POULTRY	8	0.00	7	6900	4692	65	68	-03+		
870 530	MID-EAST COMPLEX	9.1	0.00	28	37000	28790	79	79	-01-		
GRAND TOTAL						266	514466	284795			

CBJ and Arab Bank near finalising deal on Amman Bank for Investment

By Abdul Salam Gharaibeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Negotiations between the Arab Bank and the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) on the former's purchase of the troubled Amman Bank for Investment (ABI) have reached advanced stages and a final agreement could be reached after the Eid Al Adha feast which starts Thursday, according to informed banking sources.

The CBJ last month dissolved the ABI's board of directors and replaced it with a special committee, chaired by a CBJ official and grouping representatives of the ministries of finance and industry and trade as well as an auditor.

The ABI, whose accumulated losses were estimated at JD 11 million, had been given sufficient time to take measures to restructure its JD 5 million capital by injecting more funds or attracting external investments but having failed.

the CBJ appointed the committee to run its affairs, until a solution is found to the problem.

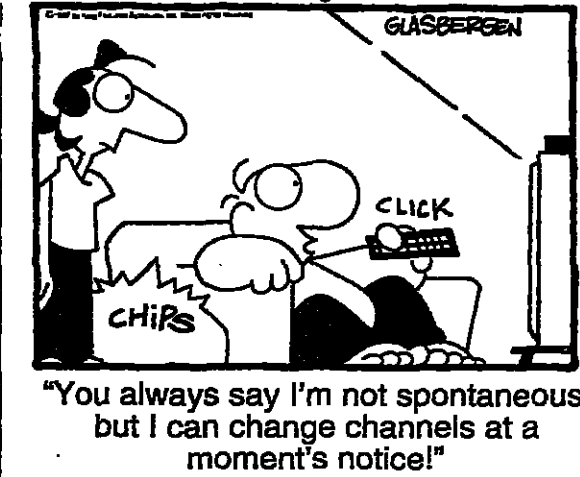
According to the sources, negotiations between the Arab Bank and the CBJ covered the fate of 170 ABI employees working at the bank's seven branches in Jordan as well as the rights of the depositors and the shareholders.

But a spokesman for the Arab Bank denied that it is negotiating to take over the ABI to transform it into an Islamic unit affiliated to the Arab Bank's own operations. He said that the Arab Bank is seeking a licence for opening a separate Islamic Bank.

The last time the ABI's shares were traded at the Amman Financial Market was Oct. 9, 1996 when its shares were sold at 300 fils each.

Foreign entities have a 2.15 per cent equity in the ABI and the rest is owned by Jordanians.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LAGED

HIFAT

ASHIMP

RILIVE

Answer: LAGED, HIFAT, ASHIMP, RILIVE (Answers tomorrow)

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: LAGED, HIFAT, ASHIMP, RILIVE (Answers tomorrow)

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Davenport beats Pierce in Amelia Island final

AMELIA ISLAND, Florida (R) — Sixth seed Lindsay Davenport won her third tournament of the year and her fifth career clay court title Sunday with a speedy 6-2 6-3 victory over 11th seed Mary Pierce of France at the Bausch Lomb Championships.

Except for top-ranked Martina Hingis who has won six titles this year, no one has won more trophies in 1997 than Davenport.

It was the second consecutive year that the 15th-ranked Pierce has been on the losing side of the final match at Amelia Island. Last year, Irina Spirlea of Romania sent Pierce home without the trophy.

Despite being on clay, the two women played a decidedly hardcourt brand of tennis in their 68-minute match. The power and variety of the shots kept the points brief rather than usually seen on the surface.

Interestingly, Davenport considers herself not much of a threat on clay but has had winning experiences on the dirt courts.

"I don't put too much expectations on myself on the clay surface," Davenport said. "I don't go out there with expectations of winning, but maybe that helps me because I don't put any pressure on myself."

Davenport, who won a \$79,000 winner's prize, played impressive tennis all week.

"It's tough to play good solid tennis many days in a row," Davenport said.

The eighth-ranked Davenport, who will move up one spot in the rankings Monday, is the first American to win at Amelia Island since Czech expatriate Martina Navratilova in 1988.

Davenport has won 10 career titles and this year also won titles at Oklahoma City and Indian Wells, back-to-back.



Mary Pierce

Pierce, the 1995 Australian Open champion, hasn't won a title since Tokyo in September 1995. This year she lost to Martina Hingis in the finals of the Australian Open, but has played in only five events, including the Fed Cup.

The Bausch Lomb Championships was Pierce's first tournament in five weeks because she was home nursing a calf injury. Both players recorded 25 outright winners in the match, but Pierce executed far more errors than Davenport. Pierce had 33 unforced errors to 14 for the American.

"I was a little off," said Pierce, who earned \$31,500. "I didn't have that little extra it takes to win a match like today. She plays a similar game to me and hits the ball quite hard. I just didn't feel I was in charge."

Pierce had problems with

her serve against Davenport, double faulting six times in the match. She lost two service games in the first set by double faulting — at 15-40 in the fifth game and at ad-out on the third break point she faced in the seventh game.

At 2-2 in the first set, Davenport won the next four games for a one-set lead.

At 3-2 for Pierce in the second set, Davenport won four straight games to take the match.

Another double fault did Pierce in the final game. Serving at 3-5, 40-30 she double faulted to deuce and lost the next two points.

Fernandez pulls out of Japan Open

TOKYO (AFP) — Two-time doubles Olympic champion Mary Joe Fernandez withdrew from the Japan Open tennis tournament without hitting a ball due to a lower back strain, the WTA announced here Monday.

The top-seeded American sustained the strain last week at Amelia Island, Florida, where she lost a quarter-final match to Amanda Coetzer of South Africa.

"This was a difficult decision for me to make, because I was looking forward to playing in my first Japan Open, but I must take time to rest my lower back," said Fernandez.

Tokyo is the place where Fernandez captured her first WTA title by winning an indoor tournament in 1990.

As per WTA rules, Annabel Ellwood of Australia will take her place in the draw as a ninth seed, while a lucky loser or a qualifier will play Jolene Watanabe of the United States in the first round.

Udinese rattle Juventus as Gullit reaches final

LONDON (R) — Four days after beating Ajax Amsterdam in their European Cup semifinal first leg and a week after thrashing A.C. Milan 6-1, Italian leaders Juventus crashed to an astonishing 3-0 home defeat to 10-man Udinese on Sunday.

Real Madrid stayed top in Spain despite a Ronaldo hat-trick in Barcelona's win over Atletico Madrid. In the Netherlands, PSV Eindhoven just kept in front of Feyenoord on goal difference.

Ruud Gullit's Chelsea reached the English F.A. Cup final while the other semifinal between Middlesbrough and Chesterfield was drawn.

Italy

Brazilian Marcio Amoroso struck twice and Germany's Oliver Bierhoff added a third as Udinese made light of the third minute dismissal of their Belgian defender Regis Genaux to rock the European Cup holders.

Juventus missed two penalties. Christian Vieri hit the bar and Zinedine Zidane saw his spot-kick saved by Luigi Turci. Their nightmare was completed when midfielder Alessio Tacchinardi also received a red card.

Argentine Hernan Crespo scored the only goal in Parma's 1-0 win at Roma to cut Juve's lead in the championship to three points.

Spain

A hat-trick from Brazilian striker Ronaldo helped Barcelona to an exciting 5-2 victory at Atletico Madrid and ensured that the Catalan side remained second in the Spanish championship.

Barcelona went 1-0 down in the 15th minute but by the break they were leading 2-1 and, helped by the fact that Atletico had

both Diego Simeone and Santi Denia sent off, finished the home side off in the second half.

Real Madrid consolidated their position at the head of the table after a comfortable 2-0 victory at struggling Logrones.

Netherlands

PSV Eindhoven retained top spot and compounded Ajax Amsterdam's week of misery with a 2-0 win courtesy of goals from Phillip Cocu and newly-signed Belgian striker Gille De Bilde.

PSV head the league on goal difference from Feyenoord who beat Willem II Tilburg 2-0. Third-placed Twente Enschede missed out on three precious points, losing 1-0 to Groningen.

England

Dutchman Ruud Gullit became the first overseas coach to take a side to the English F.A. Cup final at Wembley when his Chelsea team beat Wimbledon 3-0.

Welsh striker Mark Hughes scored in the 42nd and 90th minutes, sandwiching a superb strike from Italian Gianfranco Zola.

The identity of their opponents on May 17 remained unresolved as premier league side Middlesbrough were held to a thrilling 3-3 draw by second division Chesterfield.

After Vladimir Kinder was sent off in the 37th minute, Middlesbrough went two goals down before levelling through Fabrizio Ravanelli and Craig Hignett to take the game into extra time.

Gianluca Festa put Middlesbrough ahead but Jamie Hewitt equalised in the last minute to force a replay.

Liverpool kept up the pressure on Manchester United at the top of the Premier League with a 2-1 win over Sunderland.

Chang and Rafter share a laugh: Australia's Patrick Rafter (L) and Michael Chang of the United States laugh together during the trophy presentation ceremony of the Hong Kong Open '97 ATP tennis tournament. Top seed Chang took just 45 seconds to finish off the rain-delayed final of the tournament on Monday. Chang led 6-3 5-3 and had two match points on his serve in hand overnight after a heavy shower halted play on Sunday (Reuters photo).



Advertisement

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WINNING TEAM

On Thursday April 10, 1997 a selected group of UBM-ers were given a unique opportunity to find out that Teambuilding and good teamwork are key to the growth and success of a one-year young company like United Business Machines. The day's agenda — from 8:30 to 19:00 — was tightly packed, in order to meet a double objective: to give a lively overview of the BUILDING A WINNING TEAM workshop, and to run a Needs Analysis for the company's further skills Education Programme. Highlights such as the Teamroles session and the Business Simulation as well as the teaching philosophy of "Learning Is Fun" applied by the facilitators, Rudi Van Cowenberghe and Paul Coeckelberghs, led to a high degree of participation and customer satisfaction.

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The run to the lowest point on earth

The 5th Amman Dead Sea Ultra-Marathon was contested on 4th April 1997. The 50-km run, mostly downhill, was organised by the Amman Road Runners and the Forte Grand Hotel in Amman and was also sponsored by LG Electronics, Coca-Cola and British Airways. The event attracted a selection of international runners for the first time this year from as far afield as Germany, South Africa, Great Britain and Luxembourg. The race evolved to raise money for a local Jordanian charity, The Society for Care of Neurological Patients, and this year 165 runners participated. Thirty five athletes ran individually with many of those completing the full 50-km ultra distance and some managing the marathon or half marathon distances. The remaining 130 runners completed the full distance as relays of 2's and 4's to raise money for the charity. This year, the run attracted a total audience of about 400 people, including marshalls from the Royal Automobile Club, the army, police and Civil Defence as well as supporters. Everyone enjoyed a buffet lunch catered on the shores of the Dead Sea by Forte Grand, followed by a prize giving ceremony presented by Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, patron of the Society for Care of Neurological Patients.

JORDAN TIMES: TEL. 699634, 684311

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Pistons beat Bulls, Lakers edge Jazz

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (R) — Coach Doug Collins wept tears of joy as his Pistons beat the Bulls and half a continent away Shaquille O'Neal beamed after his buzzer-beater lifted the Lakers past the Jazz in key NBA matchups Sunday.

Terry Mills scored 29 points and Grant Hill got his fifth triple-double in his last eight games as Detroit snapped a 19-game losing streak to the Bulls, 108-91.

Detroit, which has struggled to a 3-4 record this month, beat Chicago for the first time since a 101-99 victory on March 14, 1993.

"I told the players their greatest compliment they could ever give their coach was to do what they did today — to play with courage from start to finish," said Collins, who had tears streaming down his face as the game ended.

Hill finished with 27 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists.

"One of the things the coaches talked about after the Charlotte loss was as bad as we've played the last four weeks, we're still in the playoffs, still in the thick of things," said Hill.

The Pistons, who improved to 52-26, moved into a tie for fifth place with the Charlotte Hornets in the Eastern Conference.

Detroit is also two games behind the New York Knicks and Atlanta Hawks for third.

Hill has 12 triple-doubles this season and 23 for his career.

Scottie Pippen scored 21 points and Michael Jordan 18 for Chicago, which had its five-game winning streak snapped. The Bulls (68-11) now cannot match their 72-win total of last season, but can still record consecutive 70-win seasons with two triumphs in their final three games.

Chicago has already clinched homecourt advantage throughout the playoffs.

At Los Angeles, O'Neal's 10-foot fadeaway jumper from the left baseline at the buzzer capped a



Houston Rockets Charles Barkley shoots past the defense of Seattle SuperSonics Sam Perkins (back, left) and Hersey Hawkins (foreground), during first half action. Rockets Clyde Drexler (far right) looks on as the Rockets beat the Sonics 113-73 at the Summit in Houston (Reuters photo)

39-point performance and lifted the Lakers to a 100-98 victory over Utah and back into a first-place tie in the Pacific Division.

Eddie Jones finished with 20 points and Kobe Bryant added 12 off the bench for the Lakers, who trailed by six points with nearly four minutes to go.

The win, coupled with Seattle's loss at Houston, pulled the Lakers into a tie with the SuperSonics and Rockets at 54-25.

The loss snapped Utah's 15-game winning streak and denied the Jazz a chance to set a new franchise record. Utah, which has already clinched home-court advantage throughout the western conference playoffs, also won 15 straight from November 13 to December 10.

John Stockton led Utah with 30 points and Karl Malone had 26.

"Coach called the play in the huddle," said O'Neal, playing in just his second game after missing 28 contests with a left knee injury.

"He said 'big boy, bring us home.' That's the first buzzer-beater ever in the history of Shaq O'Neal. NBA MVP this year."

Malone and Jordan are

the front-runners for the Most Valuable Player award this year.

In Houston, Clyde Drexler scored 20 points to lead seven players in double figures as the Rockets dealt the SuperSonics their second-worst loss in franchise history, 113-73.

Charles Barkley added 17 points and 15 rebounds for the Rockets, who led by as many as 44 points and beat the SuperSonics for the third time in four games this season.

Houston entered the campaign with a 13-game losing streak to Seattle.

The Rockets (54-25) have won five of their last six games and moved into a tie with Seattle for the second-best record in the Western Conference.

Gary Payton scored 22 points and was the only player in double figures for the Sonics, whose worst loss was a 124-80 setback against Dallas on April 11, 1995.

Seattle's "all-star" forward Shawn Kemp, having problems lately on and off the court, was limited to six points.

Kemp spoke out against allegations he has an alcohol problem. "It makes me

mad when my family has to hear lies about me," he said. "I've never, ever had a problem with alcohol."

At Golden State, Rex Chapman scored 17 of his 26 points in the third quarter as the Phoenix Suns defeated the State Warriors 105-97 for their 12th win in 13 games.

Chapman outscored Golden State, which had just 13 points, in the third quarter.

Kevin Johnson also scored 26 points and Danny Manning added 18 for the Suns, who are one game away from .500 after beginning the season with a franchise-record 13-game losing streak.

Phoenix (39-40) moved one-half game ahead of idle Minnesota into sixth place in the Western Conference.

In Milwaukee, the Bucks built a 30-point first-half lead and cruised to a 132-123 victory over the New Jersey Nets.

Glenn Robinson scored 25 points, 16 in the first half, to lead eight Bucks in double figures. Rookie Kerry Kittles scored a season-high 40 points for the Nets.

Group 3 World Cup qualifiers

Bahrain keeps qualifying chance alive with 1-0 win over Jordan

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

BAHRAIN MONDAY kept alive their qualifying chances when they scored a crucial 1-0 victory over Jordan in the match concluding Group 3 first round/first leg Asian World Cup qualifiers in Manama, Bahrain.

The hosts managed to maintain their first half lead and dictated the pace of the match in which they had more scoring chances especially after Jordan were reduced to only ten players following a red-card booking for key defender Muhammad Mahadin.

The result put Bahrain in second place behind the United Arab Emirates (UAE) while Jordan slipped to third and last in the Group.

The teams now move to Sharjah, UAE, for the second leg of the qualifiers which start April 19 with only the group winner qualifying to the second round.

Monday's defeat complicated Jordan's chances of staying in contention for the only qualifying berth from Group 3.

The UAE now lead the group after a 2-1 win over Bahrain and a goalless draw with Jordan.

Onlookers had given the Kingdom's team a good chance against Bahrain after their goalless draw with the UAE in the opening match — a result that was regarded as a good showing for Jordan facing the 1990 World Cup qualifier and currently Asia's second ranked team.

A win for Jordan Monday would have tied them with the UAE with four points in the overall standings going into the second leg.

However, the hosts played with a definite win in mind since the stakes were high for them too and a defeat would have meant their elimination from contention for the only qualifying berth.

This is the fourth time Jordan plays in World Cup qualifying matches after taking part in first round qualifiers for Mexico 96, Italy 90, and USA 94.

Jordan's record in eight friendly internationals in preparation for the qualifiers included three defeats, three goalless draws and two wins, both over Oman.

The Kingdom's team had two matches against Lebanon losing 1-0 and drawing 0-0.

Jordan twice lost 1-0 to the Iraqi team while both matches against Syria ended in goalless draws.

The Kingdom's only wins were 2-0 and 4-1 in Muscat.

Thirty-six Asian countries are contesting the first round World Cup qualifiers and have been divided into ten groups. Some groups have already begun their qualifiers. Lebanon drew 1-1 with Singapore in the opening match of Group 7 qualifiers.

Group 1: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Taiwan.

Group 2: Iran, Syria, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan.

Group 3: United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain.

Group 4: Japan, Oman, Nepal, Macao.

Group 5: Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Yemen, Cambodia.

Group 6: South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong.

Group 7: Kuwait, Lebanon, Singapore.

Group 8: China, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, Tajikistan.

Group 9: Iraq, Pakistan, Kazakhstan.

Group 10: Qatar, India, Sri Lanka, Philippines.

The 10 groups winners will qualify for the second round where the teams will be divided into two groups.

The first two from each group will then contest the Asian finals.

The first three qualify directly for the 1998 World Cup in France while the winner of a play-off between the fourth team and the Oceania Zone winner will also qualify.

Jordan's 31-member delegation includes nine officials including referee Dahham Eqsadat, team manager Abullatif Abdul Majid, coaches Mohammad Awad and Adnan Masud, goalkeepers' coach Basem Tayyem, and physiotherapist Hussein Atallah.

The Kingdom's lineup includes Mu'taz Rishah, Yousef Ammouri, Muhammad Mahadin, Amjad Taher, Hussein Shanineh, Faisal Ibrahim, Subhi Suleiman, Jamal Abu Abed, Adnan Awad, Nart Yadaji, Jiryes Tadros and Badran Shagran, Ahmad Abu Nasouh, Mohammad Abu Daoud, Mohammad Khaz'ali, Abdallah Abu Zame'h, Isam Mahmoud, Munir Abu Hantash, Bassam Al Khatib, Ahmad Khalil, Ja'far Hammad and Hassounah Sheikh.

GROUP 3 STANDINGS
AFTER FIRST LEG

Team	W	L	D	GF	GA	pts
UAE	1	1	1	2	1	4
Bahrain	1	1	1	2	2	3
Jordan	1	1	1	1	1	1

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Boston	7	Seattle	1
Anaheim	8	Cleveland	3
White Sox	11	Detroit	8 (Game 1)
Detroit	4	White Sox	2 (Game 2)
Baltimore	9	Texas	0
NY Yankees	3	Oakland	2 (Game 1)
Oakland	7	NY Yankees	4 (Game 2)
Kansas City	6	Minnesota	1
Milwaukee	3	Toronto	2

NATIONAL LEAGUE

San Francisco	5	NY Mets	1 (Game 1)
San Francisco	7	NY Mets	6 (Game 2)
San Diego	3	Philadelphia	1
Los Angeles	14	Pittsburgh	5
Cincinnati	6	Florida	4
Atlanta	6	Cubs	4
Montreal	8	Colorado	3
St. Louis	6	Houston	2

Villeneuve made to fight for victory in Argentine Grand Prix

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Jacques Villeneuve moved 10 points clear in the World Drivers' Championship on Sunday when he resisted a powerful challenge from Eddie Irvine to win the Argentine Grand Prix.

The Canadian, in a Williams, finished just 0.9 of a second clear of the Briton, driving a Ferrari, after a thrilling last 10 laps to an exciting 72 laps race.

Villeneuve's victory was the sixth of his career — putting him level with his late father Gilles in the record books — and lifted him to 20 points in the title race. Briton David Coulthard and Austrian Gerhard Berger share second place on 10.

"It is a really good position to be in. I feel much stronger with the team and in the car than I did at this time last year," said Villeneuve.

"But it was a very difficult race today. I had to slow a bit towards the end because my tyres were gone. It was tough. Eddie pressed me very hard and I think we chose the wrong tyres for the race. I had blistered tyres and it was difficult to keep him behind me."

"I felt very dehydrated before the race. I had a lot to drink and it was very hot, so I had a struggle."

Irvine's place was the best of his career in his 51st race, but he almost won and was within a car's length of the Williams at times in the closing laps.

"My car felt really good here and I was confident of making a good start so

I pushed hard. I went from seventh to fourth and it was great," said Irvine.

"After that I just kept on pushing. I didn't want to do a do or die attack. It was too risky so I just pressed as hard as I could. After the last year or so with Ferrari, it is great for me and I feel things are really coming together now."

German Ralf Schumacher, 21-year-old younger brother of double world champion Michael Schumacher, finished third for Jordan. This meant he scored points

and took a podium finish in only his third formula one race — in the 100th Grand Prix for the Jordan team.

Briton Johnny Herbert finished fourth for Sauber, his best result since he joined the team last year. Finland's Mika Hakkinen was fifth in a McLaren and Berger sixth for Benetton.

The safety car was introduced for four laps after yet another first corner crash. The pile-up eliminated Michael Schumacher and his Ferrari and Coulthard in a McLaren.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMARA HERSCH

BRITISH JUNIORS WIN

East-West vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH	EAST
♠ A 7 5 2	♠ K 10 9 3
♥ A Q J 6 5	♥ 10 2
♦ A Q 10	♦ 9 8 4
♣ A J	♣ A Q 8 5

WEST	EAST
♠ J 8 6 4	♠ K 10 9 3
♥ K 7 4 3	♥ 10 2
♦ K 5	♦ 9 8 4
♣ 9 4 2	♣ A Q 8 5

SOUTH	WEST
♠ Q	♠ K 10 9 3
♥ 9 8	♥ 10 2
♦ 9 8 7 3 2	♦ 9 8 4
♣ K 10 7 6 3	♣ A Q 8 5

The bidding: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST

10	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♠

The World Junior Championship, held in Bali in June, was decisively won by Great Britain, which trounced New Zealand in the final. Denmark finished third and Canada fourth. The two United States teams disappointed, with neither reaching the final four.

Sparkling defense netted New Zealand 6 International Match Points on this deal from the final. With such an unbalanced hand, South's decision to rebid three no trump seems a little strange — five

diamonds would have been a relatively simple contract as the cards lie. On the other hand, three no trump seemed a good bet after West chose the four of clubs as the opening lead.

East won the first trick with the ace of clubs and was almost outplayed. A heart return would give declarer time to score one spade, three hearts with the help of another finesse, four diamonds and a club. A diamond return would allow declarer to take five tricks in that suit and a club would be equally harmful to the defense.

The one suit that offered hope was spades. Even so, had East returned a low spade, declarer would have had an easy task. After winning the queen of spades at trick two, a diamond finesse will permit declarer to score at least two spades, two hearts with the help of a finesse, five diamonds and a club, scoring an overtrick.

East made no such mistake. The switch at trick two was to the king of spades! Now declarer had no fast entry to hand, and the defenders had to collect at least three spade tricks, a club and a diamond.

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Iranians hold rally in Mecca despite Saudi warnings

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Defying Saudi authorities, pilgrims from Iran and other Muslim countries held a rally in Mecca, Tehran Radio reported Monday.

The rally was held after evening prayers on Sunday at the Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest shrine, the radio said. The demonstration occurred despite heightened security in the city by Saudi Arabia, which repeatedly warned Iran against political activity during the annual Hajj.

Iran had said it would ignore the Saudi statements.

At their rally, the pilgrims shouted slogans in Arabic that included "Death to America" and "Israel is the enemy of God".

Earlier Sunday in Tehran, more than 100,000 Iranians marched on the German embassy to protest a German court ruling implicating Iranian leaders in political assassinations.

Hundreds of police in riot gear ringed the embassy compound, and there were no reports of violence in the capital or at protests in other cities.

In Mecca, the Iranians were joined in their demonstration by pilgrims from Pakistan, Algeria, Kuwait, Libya and Tunis as well as Palestinians, Tehran radio said.

Iran remains steadfast, Bani Sadr attacks EU for lack of real action

BONN (AFP) — Former Iranian President Abul Hassan Bani Sadr accused the European Union (EU) of supporting terrorism in its five-year dialogue with the regime in Tehran.

Mr. Bani Sadr, who has lived in exile in France since fleeing Iran in 1981, said that the EU's so-called "critical dialogue" policy of cautious rapprochement with Tehran had been a mistake and called for "active neutrality" towards Iran.

"Europe took the wrong path," said Mr. Bani Sadr in an interview with Germany's ARD television. "It merely encouraged a certain corruption and supported state terrorism."

The EU suspended its critical dialogue policy last week after a German court accused top Iranian leaders of ordering the murder of four Kurdish dissidents in a Berlin restaurant in 1992.

All EU nations except Greece decided to back Germany by recalling their ambassadors from Tehran.

"What we have seen is that Iran was running its own terrorist campaign throughout Europe," said the former Iranian leader, whose testimony to the Berlin court in the murder trial helped put a finger on the involvement of Iranian leadership in the assassinations.

"I believe that the regime and the parliament ordered a whole series of terrorist attacks."

He said that the EU should now adopt a neutral stance towards Tehran. "That means no support, be it economic or political, should be granted to the regime," Mr. Bani Sadr said.

Meanwhile, Iran stayed defiant Monday in the face of a European campaign over its alleged links to terrorism, apparently confident it will escape any concrete sanctions apart from the exodus of ambassadors.

Students prepared a new demonstration the same day in front of the German embassy to protest the German court ruling implicating Iranian leaders in the 1992 murder of four Iranian Kurdish dissidents in a Berlin restaurant.

Tens of thousands of people converged on the mission on Sunday for a rally supported by the government and widely publicised in the media. Protests were also staged in other Iranian cities.

"The nationwide protests are a warning to Germany and other countries that the Iranian

On Saturday Saudi security forces surrounded the Iranian encampment in Mecca to try to prevent political rallies.

Iran insists on holding their so-called "disavowal of infidels" ceremonies — rallies denouncing the United States and Israel — during the pilgrimage. Saudi Arabia says the Hajj should be purely religious.

Iran's leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Monday that the anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli protest by Iranian pilgrims in Mecca was necessary to raise Muslim political awareness.

"Muslims should loudly and in unison voice their hatred of arrogant powers and support for the oppressed Palestinian nation," during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, Ayatollah Khamenei said in a message to the pilgrims.

"Iran regards the Hajj as a lofty place for raising Muslim awareness. Undoubtedly, a Hajj without this element is no Hajj," he said in the message read on state radio and television.

In 1987, one such Iranian rally led to clashes with Saudi security forces in which 402 pilgrims, mostly Iranians, were killed. Iranians refer to it as "Black Friday."

The 10th anniversary of the event will be marked by a demonstration at Tehran University on Monday, the Farsi-language Salam daily reported.

Plants found on Shroud of Turin from Jerusalem

TEL AVIV (AP) — Dozens of plants whose images appear on the shroud of Turin — revered as Jesus' burial cloth — come from the Jerusalem area, suggesting the shroud originated in the Holy Land, an Israeli botany professor said.

The 4.5-metre-linen was rescued Saturday from a fire that badly damaged the Cathedral of Turin. The Roman Catholic Church has not recognised the shroud as a holy relic, and scientists are divided over whether it is genuine.

Two Israeli archaeologists have said the shroud was a crude forgery by someone ignorant of Jewish burial customs, and that the fabric could not have survived for 2,000 years in the wet Mediterranean climate. Radiocarbon tests dated it to the 14th century.

The linen, enshrined since 1578 in the Cathedral of Turin, bears the faint yellowish negative image of the front and back of a man with thorn marks on the head, lacerations on the back and bruises on the shoulders.

Avinoum "Min, a professor of botany at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said Sunday there was evidence to suggest the burial shroud came from the Holy Land.

Mr. Danin collaborated with Alan and Mary Whanger of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, said a Hebrew University statement.

Mr. and Ms. Whanger examined hundreds of plant images, and identified 28 found in what is today Israel. Mr. Danin, asked by the Whangers to verify their findings, found that of the plant types appearing on the shroud, 70 per cent can be found in a 10-square-kilometre area centred midway between Jerusalem and the desert oasis of Jericho, 35 kilometers to the east.

One of the plants, the zygophyllum, only grows in the Holy Land, Mr. Danin said.

He said radiocarbon tests concluding the shroud stemmed from the 14th century were not reliable. "The radiocarbon tests were taken from the edges of the shroud," Mr. Danin said. "This is bad sampling, because the center of the shroud is much older."

However, other Israeli scientists believe the shroud is a fake.

Joe Zias, an archaeologist at Jerusalem's Rockefeller Museum, said Jewish custom in the 1st century required the head to be left uncovered when a body was wrapped in a burial shroud.

Libya defies U.N. ban on air travel

CAIRO (AP) — Libya has again defied U.N. sanctions that ban air travel to and from the country by providing a plane to carry visiting Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir back home.

Libyan television late Sunday showed Lieutenant-General Bashir boarding the flight in the Libyan coastal town of Sirte for the trip to the Sudanese capital Khartoum. The broadcast was monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in London.

The U.N. Security Council in 1992 imposed sanctions on Libya to try to force it to surrender two Libyans wanted in connection with the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet that killed 270 people.

The sanctions limit diplomatic contacts, prohibit arms sales and ban flights in and out of the country.

Libya has for three years running violated the air travel ban by sending a jet with pilgrims to Saudi Arabia for the annual Hajj. Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi has at least twice travelled from the country by plane in defiance of sanctions.

Libya contends that the sanctions are unfair and cannot be applied to the religious pilgrimage or to official flights.

Iraq last week copied Libyan tactics and sent a jet to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj. It was Iraq's first violation of U.N. air sanctions since they were imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Each time the air sanctions have been violated, the U.N. Security Council has noted the event but has taken no action.

Gen. Bashir was in Libya

to hold talks with Ugandan officials.

Sudan has repeatedly accused Uganda of helping Sudanese rebels, who have launched an offensive against the government from neighbouring Uganda. Sudan also has accused Eritrea and Ethiopia of aiding a rebel offensive in the east.

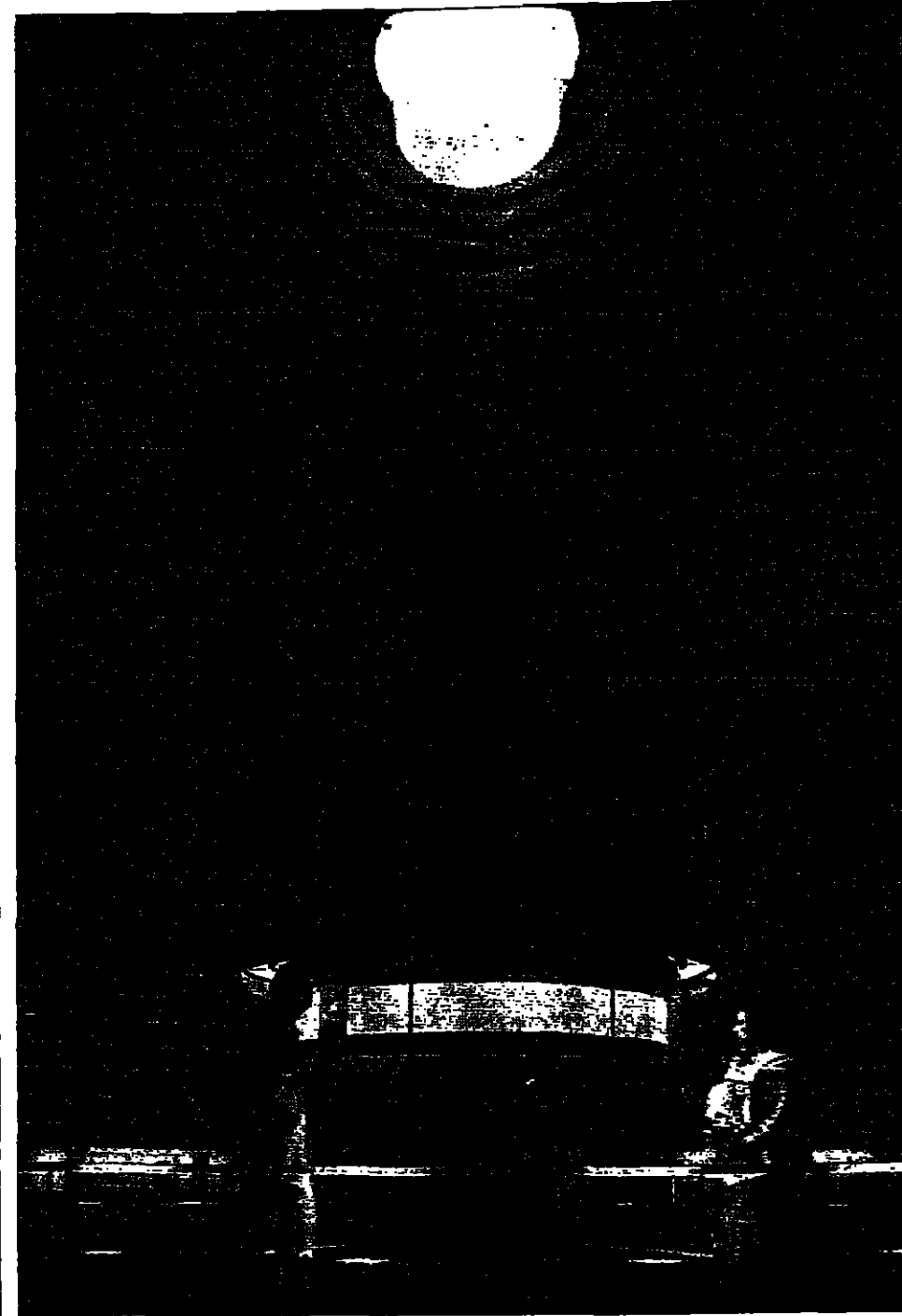
The rebels have been fighting since 1983 for more autonomy for the south's Christians and animists from the Islamic north. Gen. Bashir took power in Sudan in a military coup in 1989 and strengthened Islamic rule.

Gen. Bashir's talks with Uganda's foreign and defence ministers, which were arranged by Colonel Qadhafi, were held at Ras Ajdir, a Libyan town near the border with Tunisia, said Libya's official JANA news agency, which is monitored in Cairo.

A statement issued after the meeting by Libyan Foreign Minister Omar Al Muntasser predicted that "positive steps would follow in the coming days," the BBC said. It gave no details.

Gen. Bashir also held private talks with Col. Qadhafi, it said, quoting Libyan television. A statement issued by Gen. Bashir after the talks said the two had discussed uniting the Arab world to "face up to its enemy," which he implied was the West.

Sudan also is under U.N. sanctions, which limit diplomatic contact. The sanctions were imposed to try to force the country to surrender three Muslim militants wanted in the attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia in June 1995.



Interior of the Shrine of the Book, a special pavilion in the Israel Museum which houses the Dead Sea scrolls as visitors view on Sunday the central area where the scrolls can be read in the round (Reuters photo)

New light shed at secretive sect which wrote the Dead Sea scrolls

QUMRAN (AP) — Recent discoveries have given new insight into the day-to-day life of the secretive sect of scholar-monks who authored the Dead Sea scrolls in the remote desert enclave of Qumran.

Findings include a contract written on a pottery shard, in which an initiate turned over his orchard and a slave to the community known as Yahad, Hebrew for "together," which functioned in part as a monastery and in part as a commune, where money and property are pooled.

"This was an acceptance form for a new member," said Janet Amitai, an archaeologist who is organising a gathering of scroll scholars from around the world at the Israel Museum on July 20-25.

"A cult is a cult, 2,000 years ago and today," she said.

The conference, marking the 50th anniversary of the finding of the first scroll by a Bedouin Arab in 1947, will provide a forum for new theories and confirmation of old ones concerning one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of this century.

In all, 800 manuscripts were discovered in 11 caves between 1947 and 1956. They total nearly 130,000 words, but scholars have yet to assemble thousands of scraps.

Adolpho Roitman, director of the Shrine of the Book section of the museum where scrolls are exhibited, showed reporters at a news conference Sunday a soup-bowl-sized stone disk with concentric circles and a hole in the middle.

It was discovered in the 1950s but only recently identified as a sun dial used by the breakaway Jewish sect known as Essenes, whose calendar was different from that of the mainstream priests in charge of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

"It was very significant, because we discovered in Qumran many calendrical manuscripts," Mr. Roitman said. "Now we have the hardware, not just the software."

Also uncovered were caves showing signs of human habitation within easy walking distance of the community centre, where members of the secretive sect ate their meals and conducted ritual baths.

Magen Broshi, the archaeologist who discovered the caves last year, said they confirmed that Yahad was based at Qumran, something some scholars had doubted.

"Now we found uncontested proof that here is the place where Yahad lived," said Mr. Broshi, former director of the Shrine of the Book.

The manmade caves were the best way to survive in the intense desert heat because the earth exuded moisture and provided a cool refuge from the wind and sand.

"The qumranites were not primitive, not troglodytes. They were very sophisticated because they discovered that it was the best solution in the harsh climate of the dead sea prior to the discovery of air conditioning," he said.

Using metal detectors, his expedition also uncovered a network of paths leading to the hills overlooking Qumran. The trail was marked by hundreds of nails that fell from commune members' sandals, and dated by coins from the Hasmonian era, in the 2nd

century B.C.E. The community survived until July 68 C.E., when it was destroyed by Roman soldiers.

"This was a center of very extreme fundamentalist Jews of this time," said archaeologist Avner Goren of the Albright center in Jerusalem.

On the one hand, they lived in the desert, slept in caves and adhered with rigorous discipline to the words of the Torah, shunning religious law and interpretation laid down by the temple priests.

At the same time, they amassed significant wealth by pooling the resources of their members and ate meat at least once a day — a luxury at that time, Mr. Goren said.

He said the commune members were also clean freaks who bathed frequently and carried around a trenching tool and a cloak to cover themselves when they defecated in the rocky plains.

Experts believe the number of sect members ranged from 100 to 200, but disagree on whether it was an all-male society or included women and children.

Mr. Goren said skeletons of women and children were recently uncovered near the site, indicating that some of the members may have been women.

Mr. Broshi disputed this interpretation, however, saying the remains were on the fringe of the burial site and the bones were in heaps, indicating that they had been brought from a distance and were from people who had not lived at Qumran.

"There were no women. This is the first monastic community in the Western world," said Mr. Broshi.

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Sausage-hanging dog upsets Swiss animal groups

GENEVA (AFP) — A Pitbull terrier is to make a bid for entry into the record books by hanging from a synthetic sausage for more than an hour, its owner Michele Pecce announced in Moleno, southeastern Switzerland. "Kid", 19 months old, has to beat the record set by a Spanish dog whose formidable mandible recently held him salivating off the ground for 70 minutes. But the Society for the Protection of Animals (SPA) in Bellinzona has slammed the exercise as cruel. Pecce says his dog is under no obligation to perform its hanging stunt, and that the aim of the exercise is to improve the negative image of Pitbulls, which are often held responsible for violent attacks. The animal rights groups say no dog hangs voluntarily by its teeth for an hour, and only coercion can force it to do so. The SPA says Pitbulls are often cruelly trained with electric shocks.

Wacky inventions on display at Geneva exhibition

GENEVA (AFP) — Cigarettes that don't produce smoke, solar cookers for refugees and buttons that need no sewing were among a thousand new devices that went on display this week at Geneva's inventions exhibition, the inventors' equivalent of the Olympics. Among the most catchy ones were, from Russia, spectacles with acoustic sensors for people with sight deficiency, from Switzerland a skateboard with a shopping bag and brakes for housewives and, from the Netherlands, a device to enable women to urinate like men. The highlight of this year's exhibition was the stand of a team of Russian rocket scientists, engineers and retired army officers from Moscow's crumbling defence industry, now hoping to join in the post-Soviet money-making frenzy. A new night-vision device, an open helicopter designed for invalids, a "hydrobike" with sails, a stain-removing "dry cleaning stick" made with rocket fuel technology and a new aircraft that could help Russia's chaotic Aeroflot airline to overload even more — they could have only come from Russia. In the crowd of more than 600 scientists, boffins, engineers and wacky inventors from 44 countries, one of the most scary ideas was from a German who invented a metal device to insert into a pregnant woman's body to help deliver her baby more easily.

Man held in Miami beach for 1976 New York murder

MIAMI BEACH (AFP) — A 64-year-old man New York police had sought for more than two decades was in prison in Florida on Sunday, charged with a 1976 murder. The Miami Herald reported on Sunday that Frank Collazo was arrested on Friday for the stabbing death of Pedro Sanchez during a Labour Day block party in New York in 1976. Police told the newspaper that Collazo confessed to stabbing Sanchez after the other man swung a belt at him. New York police investigators, who flew to Miami beach to arrest Collazo, were tipped off to his whereabouts when they saw his name in social security records during a routine computer check. Collazo had managed to disappear after the killing. He had no family, had not applied for a Florida driver's licence, and had not paid federal taxes. There was no record of his employment and investigators believed he sometimes lived off the books.

Egyptian daily puts Lurie on hold

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's main government daily on Monday said it was freezing ties with a leading American-Israeli cartoonist amid accusations by the journalists union that Ranan Lurie has "Arab blood" on his hands.

"Al Ahram has decided to postpone publication of Mr. Lurie's caricatures until verification of the complaints against him, particularly in regards to his involvement in the war against the

Arabs," the daily said on its front page.

"By postponing publication of this caricature as of today (Monday), Al Ahram reaffirms its respect for the decisions taken by the General Assembly of the Journalists' Union," the newspaper said.

In mid-March Al Ahram said it had signed a contract with Mr. Lurie, an international artist whose work appears in U.S. magazines such as Time and

Newsweek.

The deal incensed the press spearheaded by the pro-government weekly Rose Al Youssef, which accused Mr. Lurie of having fought in Arab-Israeli wars and of having killed Egyptian soldiers.

Mr. Lurie denied the charges in a letter published by Al Ahram earlier this month and said he had never fought on the Egyptian front.

Nevertheless, the

Egyptian Caricaturists' Union and the Journalists' Union, which rallied to the Rose Al Youssef accusations, pressed Al Ahram to drop Mr. Lurie's cartoons.

Egypt's Journalists' Union is opposed to any attempt to normalise ties with Israel, in line with a decision taken in 1980, two years after Egypt signed the first Arab peace treaty with Israel.

Al Ahram's decision came five days after the Egyptian Actors' Union booted out

playwright Ali Salem who visited Israel, seven times between April 1994 and July 1996. The Actors' Union banned links with Israel in 1981.

It also follows a decision by the 22-member Arab League at the end of March to freeze normalisation of ties with Israel to punish it over starting the construction of a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.